

1965

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The Mountain Path

Vol. II

JANUARY 1965

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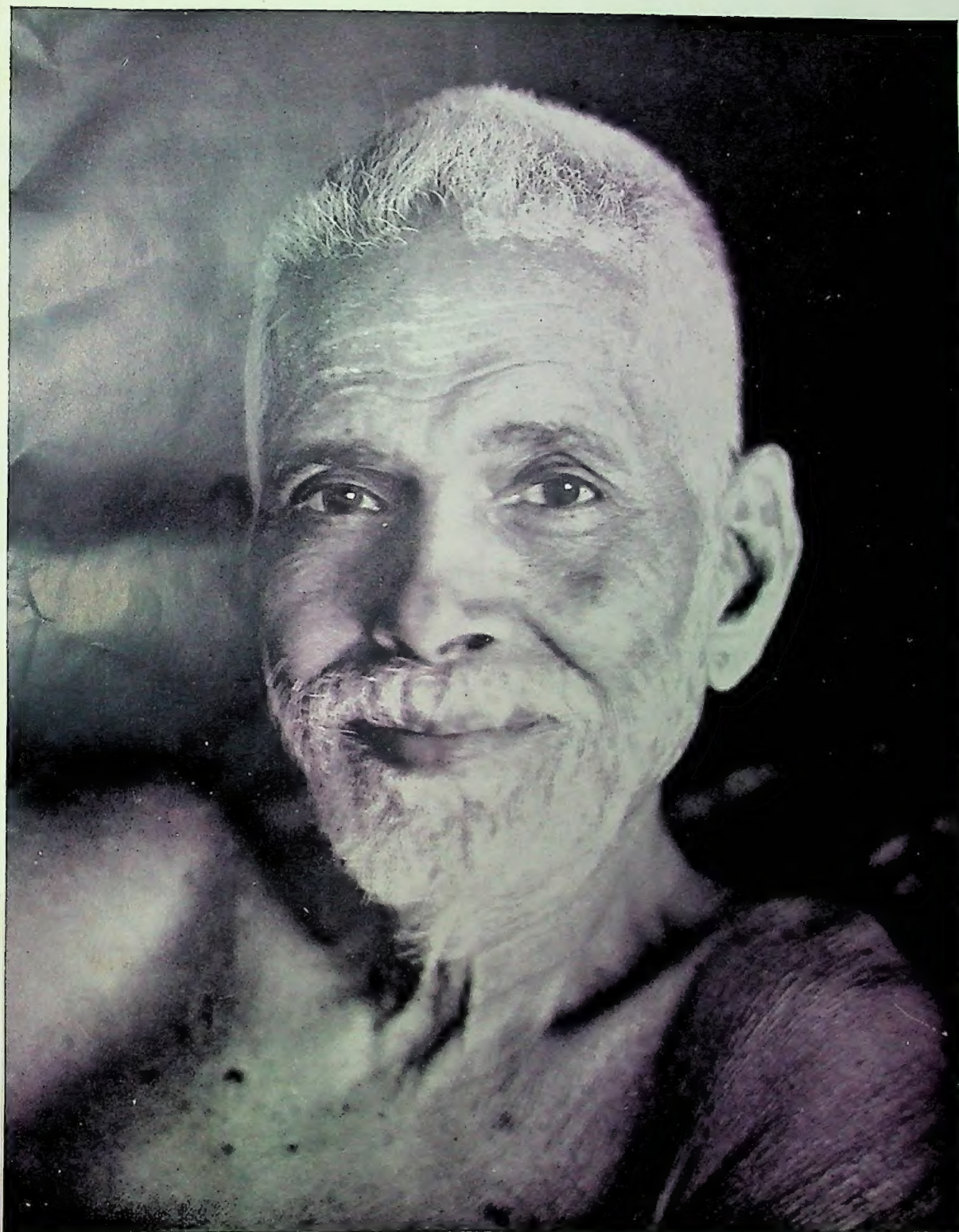
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL. II

JANUARY, 1965

No. 1

KARMA MARGA

[EDITORIAL]

It is not meant that one should run from house and home, from wife and children and kindred, and flee out of the world, or forsake his goods so as not to regard them; but he must kill and make as nothing his own self-will.

— Jacob Boehme, *Mysterium Magnum*, XII. 55.

Karma marga is the path of action. It is often thought of to-day as more or less equivalent to social service and therefore the most suited path to modern times, but actually this is a misconception. As originally understood, it meant the path of ritualistic action such as austerities, sacrifice, formal worship, breath-control and incantations. In this sense it is the least, not the most suited to modern conditions. Whether aspirants seek the Goal through knowledge or devotion, few nowadays put their faith in ritualistic activity.

In its original form karma marga can prepare a man for the assault on the final peak but it cannot make that assault; it must always fall short for the simple reason that action cannot transcend action, just as thought cannot transcend thought, just as philosophy may help a man to conceive of the Goal but can never carry him to it. This inherent limitation will be dealt with later in this issue in connection with the Maharshi's 'Instruction in Thirty Verses'.

What is spoken of as karma marga to-day is actually a fusion of karma marga with either jnana marga or bhakti marga. Both these can be followed by a recluse and often have been. They do not necessitate outer activity. However the modern tendency is to practice them in the life of the world, and this has created the type of compound path often referred to as karma marga. This tendency has been authorised by spiritual Masters and is therefore to be regarded as a legitimate adaptation to the times and not a form of degeneracy.

First the fusion with jnana marga. This was sponsored by the Maharshi himself. In ancient times Self-enquiry was a path for the world-renouncer, to be practised in silence and solitude. When the Maharshi re-adapted it to suit the conditions of our age his instruction was to practise it while continuing one's work in the world, coolly and harmoniously, without grasping or self-interest, without even the idea 'I am doing this'. "There is no principle that actions can be performed only on the basis of

the 'I-am-the-doer' idea, and therefore there is no reason to ask whether they can be performed and the duties discharged without that idea. To take a common example, an accountant working all day in his office and scrupulously attending to his duties might seem to the spectator to be shouldering all the financial responsibilities of the institution. But, knowing that he is not personally affected by the in-take or out-goings, he remains unattached and free from the 'I-am-the-doer' feeling in doing his work, while at the same time he does it perfectly well. In the same way, it is quite possible for the wise householder who earnestly seeks Liberation to discharge his duties in life (which, after all, are his destiny) without any attachment, regarding himself merely as an instrument for the purpose. Such activity is not an obstacle on the path to Knowledge, nor does Knowledge prevent a man from discharging his duties in life. Knowledge and activity are never mutually antagonistic and the realization of one does not impede the performance of the other, nor performance of one the realization of the other."¹

This is in conformity with the teaching of the Gita : "Your concern is only with action, not with its results. Do not be motivated by the fruit of action, but also do not cling to inaction."²

So also is the Maharshi's warning that you cannot find peace by mere physical renunciation, because whatever outer changes you may make in your life your mind still remains with you, and it is this that has to be subdued. "No one can remain really actionless, even for an instant, for every one is driven inevitably to action by the qualities (gunas) born of nature."³

Outer renunciation, as the Maharshi warned, is seldom advisable. When it involves

shirking of duties it is actually pernicious : "Renunciation of duties is not right. It is prompted by ignorance and is said to be tamasic."⁴ "That renunciation is regarded as pure which consists in performing duties because they ought to be performed, while renouncing attachment and the fruit of one's actions."⁵

What does this involve in practice? Not social service. People who follow this path do not go out of their way to find and relieve social injustices or cases of ignorance, poverty and disease. On the other hand, they do not cause injustice or disharmony. They help to the best of their ability such as come their way needing help. They accomplish their tasks in life, both in profession and family, as a function, a duty, a harmony, obtruding their self-will as little as possible. By being harmonious they diffuse harmony. If all lived in this way there would be no need for social service because there would be no exploitation of the weak by the strong, the poor by the rich, children by parents or women by men, and therefore no injustice to set right.

This path, as prescribed by the Maharshi, can be called the modern form of jnana marga ; but since it is performed in the life of the world and involves a life of activity it can also be called a modern form of karma marga.

The late Swami Ramdas is an outstanding example of the fusion of karma marga and bhakti marga. In his early autobiography 'In Quest of God',⁶ he tells how, while following the path, he travelled about India as a penniless sadhu, visiting ashrams and swamis, wandering through the Himalayas, living in caves, travelling ticketless on trains, bullied by railway officials and police, and all the time calling on the name of Ram⁷ and seeing Ram

⁴ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 9.

⁶ Published by Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7.

⁷ Used as a name of God ; historically the name of the Seventh Avatara, Rama, of the *Ramayana*.

¹ *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, p. 80-81, Rider & Co. edition, p. 98 in the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

² *Bhagavat Gita*, 11, 47.

³ *Ibid.*, 111, 5.

manifested in all who met him, friendly or hostile. If one sadhu gave him a drinking vessel and another stole it he would simply say: "Ram in one form gave it and in another took it away." Later, when he became a Swami and set up an ashram he would address all letters to men as 'Beloved Ram' and to women as 'Beloved Mother'.

On this path the devotee, training himself to see God manifested in all, serves God in serving all, loves God in loving all. It is not social service but divine service since whoever he serves is, for him, a form assumed by Ram. It could be called karma marga in that it is a path of action and service to be followed as well by the householder as the sadhu; it could be called bhakti marga in that it is a path of love, serving one's neighbour because by doing so one is serving God. It is a fusion of the two.

There is sanction for this attitude in other religions also. Christ sanctioned it in saying: "Inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these you do it also to me." It would seem to be totally alien to Islam, which does not acknowledge the possibility of Divine Incarnation; and yet the Muslim is told: "Whichever way you turn there is the Face of God."⁸ In the face of each person who turns to him the bhakti sees a mask over the Face of God.

Whatever kind of karma marga may be followed, it raises the question of work or renunciation, an active or contemplative life. It is a mistake to suppose that most monks are contemplatives. In most Christian monasteries the day is divided into periods of manual labour, study, prayer and ritual worship, leaving little time for leisure and not a great deal for sleep. In a Buddhist monastery also a monk's time is usually fully occupied. Zen monasteries in particular tend to prescribe hard manual labour for the monks. The article by Marie Byles on 'Zen Training in Japan' in our issue of July 1964 shows how arduous the life can be.

A Hindu ashram is a less formal institution. Properly speaking, it is simply the colony that grows up round a guru, and therefore its character will vary with that of the guru in charge. There can, therefore, be an ashram where the discipline is rather lax and another where it is quite strict. Occupational work may or may not be demanded of the inmates. They may be required to carry on the entire maintenance of the ashram, growing crops, preparing food etc. It is not unknown for an ashram to require a recruit to surrender his entire property to it, remaining henceforth as dependent on it as a monk on his monastery. One difference is that visitors and temporary residents are usually allowed at an ashram, seldom at a monastery. They may or may not be subject to the same discipline as the regular inmates.

In its lack of formal routine Sri Ramanaashram is rather exceptional. The Maharshi himself never organized an ashram. The necessary framework was constructed around him — a meditation hall, an ashram office and bookstall, a dining hall, post office, dispensary, etc. A number of sadhus settled there and were set to work at one job or another — librarian, post-master, cook, typist, gardener — all the varied occupations necessary for running an institution. Other sadhus settled down outside the Ashram, neither working for it nor maintained by it. Married devotees built houses, establishing a colony round about; and what they did with their time was their own affair. Such sadhus and householders count as members of the Ashram insofar as they are devotees of Bhagavan and obey the Ashram rules while on its premises, but the arrangement of their lives outside is up to them, as also is their maintenance.

This rather anomalous category of devotees raises the question of renunciation. When a Christian renounces the world he normally enters a monastery. He has henceforth no property or family, but he has also no material insecurity. The monastery provides him with

⁸ Quran, II. 115.

food, clothing, shelter — all that he needs. It is much the same with a Buddhist monk, although in his case going out begging and thereby contributing to the monastery's upkeep is normally a part of his discipline of life. The monastic routine of life also shelters the monk from the mental insecurity that comes from lack of regular occupation.

The position of a Hindu sadhu or sannyasin is quite different. On renouncing property, family and caste he becomes a homeless wanderer. Nobody is responsible for his maintenance. He is expected to wander, begging his food, and to accept whatever is given. If his presence makes a strong impression, followers may gather around him and attend to his wants. If he has some skill that is valued he may accept food and shelter from an ashram in exchange for his services. In modern times it may even happen that he accepts an allowance from his former family or from some benevolent householder. But by and large it can be said that he has no material security, no routine of life and no regular occupation.

During the Maharshi's lifetime one often heard people ask his permission to renounce the world and go forth as sadhus, but I never once heard him consent. "Why do you think you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a sannyasi will haunt you even if you go forth as one. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to live in the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and world and makes you think of being a householder. If you renounce it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the family and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can be

made even now, whatever be the environment."⁹

It is to be noticed that Bhagavan did not say: "The mental obstacles remain the same for you in the new surroundings," but: "They even increase greatly in the new surroundings." And in fact I have seen a number of pathetic cases of this. A man's professional work keeps his mind occupied on the surface while at the same time permitting an undercurrent of remembering or meditation. Bhagavan's injunction was to foster this undercurrent, to do one's work impersonally, asking oneself the while: "Who does this work? Who am I?" One illustration of this that he gave was the actor who plays his part on the stage quite well although knowing at heart that he is not the person he acts and therefore not getting elated if the playwright has allotted that person final success or dejected if he has allotted him failure or a tragic death. Another was that of the accountant, which I have already quoted.

A man's professional work may be irksome to him; it often is. He may feel regretfully how much more progress he could make if he had the whole day free for spiritual practice. But before he takes the drastic step of renouncing his life in the world let him first try for one single day occupying his mind exclusively with meditation or whatever spiritual practice he may be performing from the time he wakes in the morning until sleep can no longer be held off at night, with only short breaks for necessary meals. He will find that he cannot hold his mind persistently to the quest even for one whole day. It is only on a high level of development that the mind ceases to demand outer activity. Deprived of the irksome but relatively harmless activity of professional work it will turn instead to more injurious activities such as day-dreaming, planning, scheming or social trivialities and, as

⁹ *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 78, Rider & Co. edition; p. 94. Sri Ramana Maharshi edition.

the Maharshi said, the mental obstacles will "increase greatly".

Nor can the gap be filled by reading. A certain amount of reading is helpful and in many cases necessary, especially at the beginning, but excessive reading can become a drug, dulling the mind and distracting from real spiritual effort. Once the mind is convinced of the basic truth of Identity why re-convince it over and over again? Why study techniques that one is not going to use, theories that one does not need? Sometimes something one reads may come as a useful reminder and spur one on to greater or wiser effort, but much of it is just a drug to keep the mind occupied. It may even lead to a gluttony for useless facts or pride in possession of them or to arrogance at the thought of understanding more than the writer.

Family ties may also seem irksome. It may appear that one would have a freer mind for sadhana without them. And yet in most cases they can be made a discipline for subduing egoism, which is the purpose of sadhana. Their removal all too often invites an upsurge of egoism, leaving a person free to think exclusively of himself, the impression he is making on others, his progress on the path, even his physical health and material needs.

Of course, if a sannyasin really renounces everything and has to beg and cook his food that may prove occupation enough, though not necessarily a nobler or more spiritually profitable activity than that which he has renounced. If, however, he retains sufficient means of subsistence to escape this need (as often happens nowadays) and his mind remains

without any occupation other than sadhana there is grave danger of deterioration. Sex, which he rashly supposed conquered, may rise up again; or he may fill the gap by setting up as a guide to others when he should still be concentrating on his own progress; or fall victim to some undesirable activity or come under the domination of some false guide; or he may simply sink into boredom and trivialities from which he will eventually seek escape by renouncing the quest entirely. One who has seen so many pathetic cases of renunciation leading to deterioration can only advise people very earnestly to refrain and put up with the irksome but protective outer shell of professional and family life.

Moreover, spiritual growth, like the growth of a seed, takes place in the dark. Grace sinks down into it like gentle rain. Progress may be the greatest when least visible, even when one is dejected and thinks one is falling back. To strip away from it the outer cover of routine life and try to subject it to the full daylong glare of the conscious mind may do it incalculable harm. From this point of view also it is better not to renounce.

This caution, however, does not apply to Christians or Buddhists thinking of becoming monks since, as I said above, the monastic routine of life is in most cases quite an active karma marga, whether in the original or the modern meaning of the word. For the same reason it may not apply to Hindus thinking of dedicating their lives to the Ramakrishna Mission, since this is a new departure in Hindu spiritual discipline, having more in common with Christian monastic life than with traditional Hindu sannyas.

The central theme for our *April Issue* will be **Tantra Marga**;
for our *July Issue* **Guidance and Realization**.

Contributions for the July Issue can still be received.

INSTRUCTION IN THIRTY VERSES

One of the Puranas, those ancient jumbles of history and myth, tells of a group of rishis who lived in the forest together, practising rites and incantations by which they acquired supernatural powers. They hoped by the same means to acquire final Liberation, but in this they were mistaken, for action can only produce action, not the cessation of action; rites can only produce powers, not the Peace of Liberation which is beyond all powers.

In order to convince them of their error, Siva appeared before them as a wandering sadhu. Together with him came Vishnu in the form of a fascinating lady. All the rishis were smitten with love for her and thereby their equilibrium was disturbed and their powers adversely affected. Moreover their wives, who were also living with them in the forest, all fell in love with the strange sadhu. Incensed at this, the rishis conjured up a wild elephant by their occult powers and sent it against Siva to destroy him, but he killed it and stripped off its skin to wear as a cloak. Next they sent a tiger and he treated it the same way, using its skin as a wrap. Realizing at last that they were up against one more powerful than themselves, they bowed down before him and besought him for instruction.

What meaning informs the exuberance of this myth? The rishis were concerned with outer manifestation, with powers and the use of them, and this corresponds to the married state; therefore they had their wives with them. Nevertheless, they were seeking God; therefore God appeared to guide them, but in a form which, on account of their obsession, they could not recognize. They fell in love rather with the beauty of nature, which was also God, though they did not recognize it. Their wives, that is their powers of expression, their shaktis, were fascinated by formal manifestation of Siva who is the Formless Spirit, but they resented this, regarding it as a threat



to their ego-expression. They even aspired to hurl their creations against the Formless but saw themselves mocked and their forms of power made limp and used as a garment. Then only they felt the power of the Spirit and bowed down, seeking guidance.

Nearly everything the Maharshi wrote was in response to some request. A disciple of his, the eminent Tamil poet Muruganar,¹ was writing this myth in Tamil verse, but on coming to the actual *upadesa* or instruction which Siva gave to the rishis, he asked Bhagavan, who was Siva Incarnate, to write it. Bhagavan thereupon wrote his *Upadesa Saram* or 'Essence of Instruction' in thirty verses, grading the methods of training from the outer to the inner, declaring speech or incantation more efficacious than action or ritual, silent repetition more than vocal, meditation more than that, and most potent of all pure abidance in the Self, undisturbed by thought.

¹ For an introduction to whom see 'The Mountain Path' of Oct. 1964, p. 244-5.

Upadesa Saram

1. Action (karma) bears fruit (in action), for so the Creator ordains. But is it God? (It cannot be for) it is not sentient.
2. The results of action pass away, and yet leave seeds that cast the agent into an ocean of action. Action (therefore) does not bring Liberation.
3. But acts performed without any attachment, in the spirit of service to God, cleanse the mind and point the way to Liberation.
4. This is certain : worship, incantations, and meditation are performed respectively with the body, the voice, and the mind and are in this ascending order of value.
5. One can regard this eightfold¹ universe as a manifestation of God; and whatever worship is performed in it is excellent as the worship of God.
6. The repetition aloud of His name is better than praise. Better still is its faint murmur. But the best is repetition within the mind — and that is meditation, above referred to.
7. Better than such broken thought (meditation) is its steady and continuous flow like the flow of oil or of a perennial stream.
8. The lofty attitude 'He am I' is preferable to the attitude 'He is not me'.
9. Remaining in the Real Being, transcending all thought through intense devotion, is the very essence of Supreme *Bhakti*.
10. 'Absorption into the source' or core of Existence (or the Heart) is what the paths of karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana teach.
11. As birds are caught with nets, so by holding the breath, the mind is restrained and absorbed. This (breath-regulation) is a device for effecting absorption.
12. For mind and life-breath (*prana*), expressed in thought and action, diverge and branch out, but they spring from a single root.
13. Absorption has two forms, *laya* and *nasha*. That which is merely absorbed in *laya* revives; if it is dead, it does not revive.
14. When the mind gets absorbed by breath-restraint, then it will 'die', (i.e. its form will perish) if fixed to a single point.
15. The great yogi whose mind is extinguished and who rests in Brahman, has no karma, as he has attained his true nature (Brahman).
16. When the mind withdraws from external objects of sense and beholds (i.e. engages in mystic introspection of) its own effulgent form, that is true wisdom.
17. When the mind unceasingly investigates its own nature, it transpires that there is no such thing as mind. This is the direct path for all.
18. The mind is merely thoughts. Of all thoughts, the thought 'I' is the root. (Therefore) the mind is only the thought 'I'.
19. 'Whence does this "I" arise?' Seek for it within; it then vanishes. This is the pursuit of Wisdom.
20. Where the 'I' vanished, there appears an 'I-I' by itself. This is the Infinite (*Purnam*).
21. This is always the true import of the term 'I'. For we do not cease to exist even in the deepest sleep, where there is no waking 'I'.
22. The body, senses, mind, life-breath (*prana*), and ignorance (*avidya* or *sushupti*) are all insentient and not the Real. I am the Real (*Sat*). These (sheaths) I am not.
23. As there is no second being to know that which is, 'that which is' is conscious. We are that.

¹ Eightfold in that it is composed of the five elements, the sun and moon and the individual being.

24. Creatures and Creator both exist. They are One in Being. Their differences are the degrees of their knowledge and other attributes.

25. When the creature sees and knows himself without attributes, that is knowledge of the Creator, for the Creator appears as no other than the Self.

26. To know the Self is to be the Self—as there are not two separate selves. This (state) is *thanmaya nishta* (abiding as That).

27. That is real knowledge which transcends both knowledge and ignorance. There is no object to be known There.

28. When one's true nature is known, there is Being without beginning and end ; is unbroken Awareness-Bliss.

29. Remaining in this state of Supreme Bliss, past all thoughts of bondage and release is abiding in the service of the Supreme.

30. The Realization of That which subsists when all trace of 'I' is gone, is good *tapas*. So sings Ramana the Self of all.

BE STILL

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Thou art ? — I am ? — Why argue ? — Being is.
Keep still and be. Death will not still the mind.
Nor argument, nor hopes of after-death.
This world the battle-ground, yourself the foe
Yourself must master. Eager the mind to seek,
Yet oft astray, causing its own distress
Then crying for relief, as though some God
Barred from it jealously the Bliss it sought
But would not face.

Till in the end,
All battles fought, all earthly loves abjured,
Dawn in the East, there is no other way
But to be still. In stillness then to find
The giants all were windmills, all the strife
Self-made, unreal ; even he that strove
A fancied being, as when that good knight
Woke from delirium and with a loud cry
Rendered his soul to God.¹

Mind, then, or soul ?
Break free from subtle words. Only be still,
Lay down the mind, submit, and Being then
Is Bliss, Bliss Consciousness : and That you are.

¹ It is noteworthy that he did not cease to be Don Quixote but realized that he never was Don Quixote.

PATHS TO SELF-REALIZATION

By DR. B. V. RADHAKRISHNAN

Among the four Hindu Purusharthas or goals in life — dharma, artha, kama and moksha (righteousness, prosperity, pleasure and Liberation) — the last is regarded as supreme. All systems of Hindu thought except the Charvaka believe in the final emancipation of man from samsara or incarnation. This final release is variously designated Moksha, Nirvana, Kaivalya or Apavarga. In order to attain it there are the various paths of karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana. Sri Ramana grades them according to their efficacy in his *Upadesa Saram*, quoted in this issue.

Sri Ramana is the embodiment of Advaita Vedanta. He was not an academic philosopher and did not like expounding theory, but he had the wisdom that comes from direct experience of Reality.

Liberation or Mukti, he taught, is becoming One with Brahman; or rather, since the identity of the atma with Brahman has always subsisted and has only been hidden by illusion, it is awakening to consciousness of identity with the Supreme Self.

This identity is existent from eternity, though hidden from our view. "That which is real in the absolute sense, highest of all, eternal, all penetrating like the ether, exempt from all change, all sufficing, undivided, whose nature it is to be its own light, in which neither good nor evil, nor effect, nor past, present or future has any place, that formless is called Liberation."¹ It is not a coming into being of what did not formerly exist, for whatever comes into being must also have an end and is therefore ephemeral. Mukti is thus not an achievement or attainment but only cessation of the process of

becoming. It is not abolition of one's self but realization of its infinity and absoluteness by the expansion and illumination of consciousness. It is not to be relegated to a future time or located in a place called Svarga or Brahma Loka or any other name. It just is.

Sri Ramana often reminded us that Mukti is not anything new to be attained. But is our real nature. "There is no realizing the Self. The Self is always realized."² Only knowledge of it is obstructed, and this obstruction we call ignorance. "To enquire 'Who am I that am in bondage?' and to know one's real nature is alone Liberation."³ In the Self there is neither bondage nor Liberation. The egoless state is the only reality.

Like all the sages and saints of India, he affirmed that this can be realized through the Grace of the Guru. But that implies that the Guru is not another individual external to us but is the Self manifested. So long as we identify ourselves with the body we take the Guru to be another bodily individual external to us. But really we are not the body, nor is he. We are the Self and he is also. Realization means converting this theoretical understanding into direct knowledge. Even though we mistake the body for the Guru, he himself makes no such mistake. He appears outwardly only to guide us. This is what Sri Ramana meant when he said that Self, God and Guru are the same. Therefore he could make the tremendous statement that "He who has earned the Grace of the Guru will undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that

² *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 490. Sri Ramanasramam.

³ *Who Am I?*, p. 46-47. (*Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co.)

¹ *Vedanta Sūtras* with Sankara's commentary, 1-1-4.

has fallen into the jaws of the tiger will never be allowed to escape.”⁴

Who, then, is the Guru? It is clear that in the high sense in which Sri Ramana uses the term it can only be the perfect Sage who is in uninterrupted conscious Identity with the Universal Self. “The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others and is quite free from the idea that he is the Enlightened or the Liberated one while those around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance. His self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances and he is never perturbed.”⁵

Such a one is called a Jivan-Mukta, Liberated while living. “A jivanmukta is one who is free from any sense of the reality of external objects, only seeming to have such a sense. . . . His mind is wholly merged in Brahman and enjoying eternal bliss. He is free from duality. Though awake he is free from the qualities of the waking state. The absence of the idea of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ even while in this body, which follows like a shadow, is a characteristic of the jivanmukta. He does not dwell on the enjoyments of the past, takes no thought for the future and looks with indifference on the present. He is unruffled by pain or pleasure and is free from the bondage of transmigration.”⁶

Can a jivanmukta be subject to ignorance? It is traditionally agreed that he can. This is likened to a dark shadow on a white canvas — it cannot produce any effect on him. His continued bodily existence is compared to a potter’s wheel moving round for a while after producing the pot. Sri Ramana used to compare it to an electric fan revolving a few times even after the current is turned off. *Ajnana-lesa* or ignorance is the continued momentum

of the wheel; it produces no further karma for the liberated. What appears to be activity in him is only akarma, that is inaction or unattached action.⁷

Some have said that complete Liberation can be attained only after destruction of the body, but that is not accepted by those who know. Sri Ramana has definitely asserted that “There is no difference (between a jivanmukti and a videha-mukti). For those who ask it is said that a Realized Man with a body is a jivanmukta and that he attains videhamukti when he sheds the body, but this difference exists only for the onlooker, not for him. His state is the same before shedding the body and after.”⁸

Is he, then, still bound by karma? Sri Ramana gave us the perfect answer when he said that the body may be but he is not, since he no longer identifies himself with the body. “The truth is that the Realized Man has transcended all destiny and is bound neither by the body nor by its destiny.”⁹

Now let us turn from consideration of the Goal to the path. Sri Ramana explained that karma or action can never lead to Liberation.¹⁰ However, action performed without attachment and in a spirit of service to God can point the way to Liberation and purify the mind, thus enabling it to take a more efficacious path.¹¹ Physical acts of worship and ritual, vocal action such as incantations and purely mental action such as meditation are helpful, and in this order, each more so than the preceding.¹²

Similar was his verdict on breath-control, also a form of action. “The practice of breath-control is merely helpful in subduing the mind but cannot bring about its final extinction.”¹³

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵ *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne, p. 140. Rider & Co.

⁶ Shankaracharya’s *Viveka Chudamani*, vv. 429-436.

⁷ *Bhagavad Gita*, IV, 20.

⁸ *Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, p. 192, edited by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹⁰ *Upadesa Saram* (printed in this issue), v. 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, v. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, v. 4.

¹³ *Who am I?*, p. 43.

In fact he taught that breath-control is not an independent technique but only an approach towards mind-control. "Breath-control is a help in controlling the mind and is advised for such as find they cannot control the mind without some such aid. For those who can control the mind and concentrate it is not necessary. It can be used at the beginning until one is able to control the mind but then it should be given up."¹⁴ "The mind subsides by the practice of breath-control, but such subsidence lasts only as long as the control of breath and vital forces continues; and when they are released the mind also gets released and immediately, becoming externalized, it continues to wander through the force of its subtle tendencies."¹⁵

Coming now to the path of bhakti, Sri Ramana said that remaining in the Real Being, transcending all thoughts through intense devotion, is the very essence of supreme bhakti. He explained that true bhakti means surrendering the ego so completely that nothing remains of it, and this comes to the same as discovering by Self-enquiry that there is no ego. "There are only two ways," he often said; "Ask yourself 'Who am I?' or surrender."

The most direct path to Self-realization, he explained, is Self-enquiry. It leads directly to Self-realization by removing the obstacles which make one think that the Self is not already realized. "Even though the mind sub-

sides by other means, that is only apparently so; it will rise again."¹⁶

On occasion Sri Ramana sanctioned all methods, although grading their efficacy, as already explained. He also said that the final state of Self-realization is the same by whatever path or through whatever religion it has been approached. However, the most efficacious way is Self-enquiry. "The only path of karma, bhakti yoga and jnana is to enquire who it is who has the karma, vibhakti (lack of devotion), viyoga (separation) and ajnana (ignorance). Through this investigation the ego disappears and the state of abidance in the Self in which none of these negative qualities ever existed remains as the Truth."¹⁷ Just as milk is uniformly white though drawn from cows of different colours, so also realization is uniform for all persons of whatever denomination.¹⁸

In fact all ways are good provided they lead to the merging of the ego in the Self. What the devotee calls surrender the Advaitin calls knowledge. Both alike are trying to take the ego back to its source and make it merge there.¹⁹ One sacrifices the ego on the altar of love, the other discovers that it does not exist and never did; both arrive at the same ultimate point of its non-existence.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁷ *Supplementary Forty Verses*, v. 14 (*Collected Works*).

¹⁸ *Atma Satshatkara*, v. 42 (*Collected Works*).

¹⁹ *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, vol. 11, p. 35. By Devaraja Mudaliar, Sri Ramanasramam.

¹⁴ *The Teachings*, p. 146.

¹⁵ *Who am I?*, p. 42.

BEYOND ACTION

The Godhead is absolute Stillness and Rest, free from all activity and inaccessible to human thought, yet alive through and through, a tremendous Energy pouring itself out into the created world and drawing that world back into itself.

— RUYSBROECK.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

V

By SWAMI RAMDAS

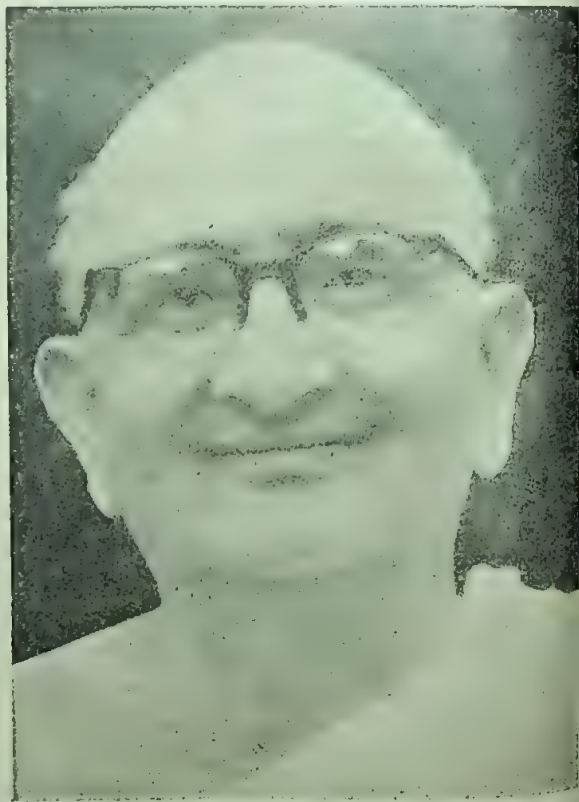
In his early autobiography, *In Quest of God*, (published by Anandashram, Kanhangad) Swami Ramdas (for an article on whom see our issue of Jan. 1964) describes how he attained the Divine Vision through the Grace of the Maharshi. Years later he told this story to Dilip Kumar Roy who reproduced it in his latest book, *The Flute Calls Still* (published by Indira Niloy, Hari Krishna Mandir, Poona, and reviewed in our issue of Oct. 1964). Since some parts of the story are more detailed in one account and some in the other, we have here combined them. We are grateful to both ashrams for permission to quote from their publications.

"Papa," I said, "would you mind telling us about your final Realization which they call 'Vishvarupa Darshan'?"

He readily acquiesced and gave a long description of his burning aspiration and yearning which had led him to Arunachala Hill, hallowed by the tapas of the peerless saint Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. I can give here only the gist of his long narration. . . .

One day the kind Sadhuras took Ramdas for the darshan of a famous saint of the place named Sri Ramana Maharshi. His Ashram was at the foot of Arunachala. It was a thatched shed. Both the visitors entered the ashram and, meeting the saint, fell prostrate at his holy feet. It was really a blessed place where that great man lived. He was young but there was on his face a calmness and in his large eyes a passionless look of tenderness which cast a spell of peace and joy on all those who came to him. Ramdas was informed that the saint knew English, so he addressed him thus: "Maharaj, here stands before thee a humble slave. Have pity on him. His only prayer to thee is to give him thy blessing."

The Maharshi turned his beautiful eyes towards Ramdas and looked intently for a few minutes into his eyes as though he was pouring into Ramdas his blessing through those orbs, then shook his head to say he had blessed. A thrill of inexpressible joy coursed



through the frame of Ramdas, his whole body quivering like a leaf in the breeze. . . .

Now at the prompting of Ram, Ramdas desired to remain in solitude for some time . . . The sadhuras was ever ready to fulfil his wishes. Losing no time, he took Ramdas up the mountain behind the great temple. Climbing high up he showed him many caves. Of

these, one small cave was selected for Ramdas, which he occupied next day. In this cave he lived for nearly a month in deep meditation of Ram. This was the first time he was taken by Ram into solitude for his bhajan. Now he felt most blissful sensations since he could hold undisturbed communion with Ram. He was actually rolling in a sea of indescribable happiness. To fix the mind on that fountain of bliss, Ram, means to experience pure joy ... He went on taking the Name in an ecstasy of longing when, lo, suddenly his Lord Rama ... appeared before him and danced and danced ...

"Did you see him with closed eyes or open?" I interjected.

"With open eyes, as Ramdas is seeing you," Papa answered. "But it was not this momentary vision that Ramdas's heart craved. For he knew that a vision like this was unlikely to last and so, when the Lord would vanish, Ramdas would revert to his darkness. Therefore he prayed for the great darshan, the Vision of visions, which comes to stay for ever so there is no more parting, namely the Vishvarupa Darshan, longing to see Rama always in everything; that is nothing less would satisfy Ramdas."

Papa paused and then resumed with a beatific smile: "And it came one morning apocalyptically — when, lo, the entire landscape changed: All was Rama, nothing but Rama — wherever Ramdas looked! Everything was ensouled by Rama — vivid, marvellous, rapturous — the trees, the shrubs, the ants, the cows, the cats, the dogs — even inanimate things pulsed with the marvellous presence of the one Rama. And Ramdas danced in joy, like a boy who, when given a lovely present, can't help breaking out into a dance. And so it was with Ramdas: he danced with

joy and rushed at a tree in front, which he embraced because it was not a tree but Rama Himself! A man was passing by. Ramdas ran towards him and embraced him, calling out: 'Rama, O Rama!' The man got scared and bolted. But Ramdas gave him chase and dragged him back to his cave. The man noted that Ramdas had not a tooth in his head and so felt a little reassured: at least the looney would not be able to bite him!" He laughed out and we swelled the chorus.

"And then?" I asked, after the laughter had subsided.

"The bliss and joy came to be permanent, like a torrent rushing downhill till it finds a placid level of limpid purling stream. This experience is called sahaja samadhi, in which you can never be cut off from the consciousness of being at one with the One who has become all, in which you feel you are one with all because you have perceived that all is He, the One-without-a-second."

* * * *

Finally we end with a comment made by Swami Ramdas in '*Vision*', the monthly journal published by Anandashram, about forty years later.

Ramdas went to Ramana Maharshi in a state of complete obliviousness of the world. He felt thrills of ecstasy in his presence. The Maharshi made the awakening permanent in Ramdas.

Some people told Ramdas: "You went to Maharshi and you got illumination. Give us illumination like that." Ramdas said, "You must come to Ramdas in the same spirit and in the same state as he went to Maharshi. Then you will also get it. Where was his heart? How intense was his longing? What was the world to him at that time? If you come in that state it is all right."

TRANSCENDENCE OF KARMA

By PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM

All worthwhile acts of man are acts of integration. The scientist goes on fitting fact with fact and is satisfied only if they cohere so as to yield "laws" of increasing comprehensiveness. If he encounters difficulties in this process, he re-examines his "facts" and recasts his "laws" till at last he succeeds. The painter sets his highest value on "composition" and indeed artists of all kinds principally seek unity of impression, such achieved unity being called "beauty," not conformity to any preconceived notions of prettiness inducing pleasant feelings in the beholder. How else shall we explain the lofty appeal of tragedy and of all those works of art in which the predominant effect is overwhelmingly the dark and forbidding? Integration of all one's inward resources so as to result in a chosen settled pattern of conduct, not allowing casual impulses and random desires to distract one, is character. But ideals of character differ; the Athenian ideal of character was one thing and the Spartan was another. Therefore, though character (that is, morals) enters into the inner region of human personality, it is not the final integration. For the quality of the moral ideal itself needs to be judged by us, ourselves standing outside it.

The crowning integration, then, must be such a one as our ancient sages and seers have described: an integer which the human intelligence accepts with its last distinctive act and into which it is blissfully absorbed, with no residue left to "experience" that state, let alone to judge it. The completeness of the integration, its homogeneity without subject or object, pure awareness, must testify to its own genuineness. Even the supreme satisfaction of this state, they say, is felt only when one has lapsed from it and looks back on it self-

consciously as a memory (Paingala Upanishad iii-2). It is futile for the sceptic to raise the question whether such a state is possible; for this state is not available for examination there being nothing outside it to examine it. It is enough for us that personages hailed as holy in all faiths, ages and lands, testify to it as having been entered into by them and they have proclaimed it to be the goal of our being, the basic Reality, the consummation of Intelligence and unsurpassable Bliss. Samadhi is the name given to that state in Vedanta, but Sri Ramakrishna has defined samadhi itself as yoga in its perfection.

Yoga in its perfection, then, in this state of Ultimate Integrity, realised Reality. It is evident that it cannot be "produced" or "caused" by any process or agency; for to one who has ever known that state, there is nothing which is not a mind-obstructed shadow, a mind-obscured distortion, a feeble peripheral appearance — apparition — of the light of the one Real. The Upanishad is clear on this "He sprang from nothing and nothing sprang from him" (Katha Upanishad I ii 18). All objects diverge from it. The Effulgence fills the firmament. The rays are only the mind's feeble way of receiving it. But "effulgence" and "rays" are only metaphorical speech. The Supreme Truth is not the light of the bodily eye, but the very principle of intelligence. The feeblest light at the remotest point of the ray still carries Life in it, and, therefore, all rays not only diverge but also converge, leading back towards It and into It. But, going or coming, the ray is only an appearance within the Light, not Its author.

It is evident also that there cannot be many "Yogas". If there were, we should still continue to feel the need for the true Yoga beyond

them, the one Yoga from which the "Yogas" radiate and diverge. The artificially induced trance and state of oblivion popularly called "Yoga" is deprecated by the great Gaudapada himself in his *Karika* (iii. 42). Bhagavan in his thirty verses (v. 18) discommends it. It is to entertain a poor notion of the Highest to believe that we can arrive at it by a mere psychic know-how. We can cultivate acuity of vision but still cannot see till the sun dawns, which happens independently of our efforts. That is why the Katha Upanishad declares that It reveals Itself to him whom It chooses (I. ii. 23). Similarly jnana (quest for the highest illumination), bhakti (devout and fervent surrender to the Divine) and karma (selfless activity) have given their names to three yogas. But these three paths lead in the direction of the one Yoga. In the last resort such jnana, bhakti and karma as we can gather, generate or perform have to be surrendered and left behind. Pursuit of them in earnestness and humility renders us less and less ineligible to receive the highest gift. But finally it is always the receipt of a gift, never the assertion of a claim or even the earning of a reward.

Knowledge of this is a source of reassurance to those whom a deep consideration of the Law of Karma by itself reduces to despair. The most liberal interpretation of the law is that every act one performs, besides producing its effect on the outer world and earning the due consequence for the doer, produces certain inward results. Our deeds form in our inner nature certain tendencies and inclinations, patterns of thought-feeling and behaviour, which our thinkers on Karma call vasanas and samskaras. They constitute lines of least resistance along which our energies flow thereafter. Vasanas and samskaras once formed, therefore, tend to consolidate themselves and gain a strangle-hold on us. When we think that it is we that act at the present moment, it is really our vasanas that are acting. We are prisoners to our own past in this life and in earlier ones. The Law of Karma seems to be

a prison-house whose walls inexorably rise higher and higher.

Some "scientifically-minded" persons have called this law the moral counter-part of the laws of cause and effect and of conservation of energy which obtain in the material sphere. But there is a vital difference: in the inward life of man a fact is modified merely by his becoming aware of it. If I realise that I am in an irritable mood, I am on my guard against it. I take my stand on a place which is above the mood of the moment. Attention is alertness; it is *sraddha*. Even as I begin to be aware of the Law of Karma I become more attentive to my vasanas. They do not have the same free play as before, because they are being watched. Besides, in this state of awakened attention I observe that my individuality does not have the same precise and well-guarded frontiers as I once thought it had. Influences enter into me from all around. If only I attend I can recognize them and be selective in admitting them. Receptivity to them is not controlled entirely by the vasanas from my individual past. As owners of radio-sets know, there are certain transmitting stations so powerful that an inherent feebleness in the receiver can be overcome. The Upanishadic sages, the Buddha and Sankara and indeed the influences generated by the karmas of all the good men who have ever lived are still vibrating in the air (in no 'occult' sense) and are passed over by us as parts of a medley of noises only because one does not isolate their voices and tune in a little more carefully. There is a cosmic radiation in the spiritual world, pervasive and irresistible, as there is in the physical. Sri Ramakrishna said that the wind of God's grace is always blowing, but to be impelled by it we have to hoist sail. Bhagavan has said that the great enemy of our soul is our inattention, "inattention is death itself" (p. 337 *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*). Sydney Spencer (p. 168, *Mysticism in World Religion*) quotes Plotinus as saying that God is a conductor round whom a choir is gathered. They have only to attend to him to sing

well. But the attention of some wanders and the singing suffers.

The Law of Karma is not like other laws ; the laws of matter operate on the physical plane ; the laws of biology on the vital plane ; the psychological laws on the mental plane. These are only horizontal laws, so to speak, each operating at its own particular level. But the Law of Karma is also a vertical law. We cultivate attention and ascend in awareness. Our receptivity improves and with it selectivity. So, as we rise in the scale of attentiveness, we become increasingly eligible to receive the visitations of Grace, the divine power that is only waiting to flow in. The Law of Karma is found to be not a brute force constricting us, but a volatile essence whose fragrance improves in delicacy as it becomes rarefied. At the higher level our sufferings yield us sweetness of nature ; our humiliations, humility ; our sins, compassion for all sinners.

There is even more help and hope ; even as our vasanas are being flushed out by the holy energies that flow in if only we will let them in, there gushes up from the depths of our own being a copious spring that joins the first. We are not helpless against the vasanas accumulated through the past. Their hard encrustations can be magically dissolved by the combined floods from above and below. In this resulting state of clean nudity we gain a sense of well-being, of being at last our own healthy selves. This is the state of our own "norm" or "sahaja" ; and therefore was the second stream said to spring from our own depths. Plato says that the accession of the higher wisdom is a "recollection". The Chandogya Upanishad describes the condition of the seeker of Brahman as that of a man blindfolded and abducted and left in a strange land, who can find no rest till he finds his way back to his own homeland. The Kenopanishad (IV. 5) says that there is a constant stream of recollection, a steady set of mind, a congruency of volitions deep down in ourselves towards the Highest. Our vasanas loosen their

hold on us as we listen with attentive ears to the call of our home. Attending to it, we effortlessly shed our karmas. Finally, arriving, we are masters of our Karmas. "Attending to the Self includes attending to the work" says Bhagavan (*Talks*, p. 328) — "Yoga is skill in action," says the Gita (II. 50).

Our difficulties arise because we try to correct our past karmas with karmas which we deem to be "good". Says Bhagavan, "The more you rectify your Karma, the more it accumulates" (*Talks*, p. 569). Similarly, self-dependent moral effort, self-control, is only a part of the mind trying to control another ; it only sets up a tension. "If one seeks to control the mind it amounts to mind controlling the mind, just like a thief turning out as a policeman to catch the thief" (*Talks*, p. 59). One cannot really take one's feet off the ground unless one has secured a hold on something higher. The Bhagavad Gita says (II. 59) that it is merely to abstain from sensual experiences that an effort of the will does not help. Only "when the Supreme is seen" does one obtain release from the senses and the mind. Attention, ascending awareness, a growing love of the Highest, alone can produce true release. "What can repression accomplish?" asks the Gita (III. 33). There are no good karmas to cure bad karmas. Even an act of renunciation is only one more karma, if yoga, integration at the highest point, has not preceded it. (the Gita V. 6).

All activity is congenial to the ego. Its bubble protects one from realising the crude, raw state of one's inner life. The child in the cradle flings its limbs about to proclaim that it is alive and it cries if there is no one to notice it. The activities of the adult, although more purposive and sustained are similarly motivated. He wants to assert himself and get people, many or few, to notice him. For this purpose, he accumulates and expends more knowledge, "good" impulses and deeds. Says Bhagavan said compendiously (*Talks*, p. 673) "Activity is the destruction of one's inner

happiness." All this lays up a store of karma, generates vāsanas and attracts (as lawyers say) the Law of Karma. But, all the same, Sri Krishna, even after having said "far inferior is mere action to Buddhi Yoga" (II. 49), urged Arjuna to fight. This contradiction was admitted by the teacher himself and he declared that "the way of karma is hard to understand" (IV-17).

The difficulty can be resolved if we pay as much attention to the pattern of the developing situations and ideas in the Gita as to the ideas themselves. It is to understand the whole scripture wrongly if we take it that Arjuna suddenly grew faint-hearted from sentimentality and Sri Krishna taught him to act from a sense of duty, even if the action was harsh and stern. At the beginning, Arjuna's earlier decision to fight, which brought him to the battle-field, is only in abeyance, not annulled. At the very end (XVIII. 59) Sri Krishna says "If, indulging in self-will, thou thinkest 'I will not fight', vain is this thy resolve. Nature will compel thee". But Arjuna is in a divided state of mind. It is not a case of "split personality" for it is not sub-conscious impulses and desires that divide him. It is a condition of unintegrated ideals. To fight for the right is a Kshatriya's nature and duty and it is in acknowledgement of this that Arjuna has entered Kurukshetra. Kindliness to all, renunciation of worldly desires and the superiority of a serene life of contemplation are also widely accepted Hindu ideals. In a crisis, a flaw, even in one's most carefully compacted system of ideals, shows up. This is what has happened to Arjuna. He has yet to integrate himself, find his inward stability. So Sri Krishna, from the Second Chapter onwards, undertakes to teach him the highest point at which a man can be integrated, the only lasting integration. The Colophon states that the scripture teaches knowledge of Brahman and the science of integration; that it is "Brahmavidya" and "Yoga sastra". Sri Krishna's efforts are all directed to giving Arjuna the stability that results from the attaining of illumination. A

stitha prajna, which is what Sri Krishna wants to make of Arjuna, is not a mere man of firm will, a stoic. He is one who cannot falter or waver because he has found the true light to lead him. The long discourse on metaphysics and spiritual life that fills the largest part of the Gita would be a gratuitous excursion into thought and speculation if the main purpose was to make Arjuna fight. "I have taught you the highest wisdom" is how Sri Krishna concludes. Correspondingly, Arjuna's final assurance to Sri Krishna is that he has gained recollection, recollectedness (*Smṛiti*); that he has gathered himself together at his being's centre. To help each one of us do this is indeed the purpose of the author of the Gita.

What then is the purpose of action (symbolised by Arjuna entering the battle) in the scheme of life? It is that we need the call of action to become fully awake. Ordinarily different sides of our nature assert themselves at different times and some of them long remain ignored or suppressed. But when decisive action is called for, particularly in a crisis, all of them together press themselves on our attention and we energetically search to find the point where they meet. The mere philosopher stakes nothing on his conclusions and has little incentive for earnestness. The urgency of action invests thinking with zeal. The usual contrast between a life of actions and a life of contemplation is unreal. It is as if a general should ask himself "Shall I fight the battle or win the victory"? Without his battle where is his victory to come from? That is why Sri Krishna repeatedly exhorts Arjuna not to be a lover of inaction (II. 47, XIV. 22).

The more earnest the seeker and the better endowed he is, the less satisfied is he with a merely empirical compromise between principles and forces bearing on a situation. Such compromises in the past have not stood the test of a life of action. What he seeks is not some sort of integration within himself but integration at the highest level, with Truth. This is Yoga and Yoga is a transcendent state. On this point, there is no ambiguity in the

Gita or in the Upanishads. All the elements of the physical universe (earth, water, fire, air, ether) and all the constituents of individuality (mind, understanding and the ego-sense) form the region of the relative (*apara*). The supreme state is the transcendent (*para*). It is above the moral levels (the *gunas*) ; it is independent of all the created universe of the past, present and future. Between these two, the *para* and the *apara*, is the impassable barrier of *maya*. We cannot pierce it ; we can only leap over it by the strength of the power called intuition and directly intuit the Supreme. This intuition is *vijnana*, the direct awareness of Reality, the created Universe alone being accessible to *jnana*, knowledge. Chapter VII of the Gita states every single point of this truth with clarity and with emphasis. Karma Yoga, therefore, cannot mean the performing of such acts or the performing of acts in such manner that they induct us into yoga. It means the manner in which the *yukta*, the person who has already established himself in intuition, performs his duties and engages in action. This is not merely a distinction of theoretical import. It is of the greatest practical significance. It is one thing for a man to grow into a *yukta*, to enter the spiritual life and let it blossom into noble enthusiasms and good deeds ; it is quite another for the unregenerate prodigal to go about scattering good deeds, founding institutions and championing causes. Such activities are nourishing fodder for the insidious egotism lurking in us, which avidly absorbs them into itself. The corruption of the best is the worst. Patriots have a way of finding that the quick regeneration of the country demands their dictatorship ; champions of religion easily turn into fanatics ; philanthropists discard all squeamishness about the manner of recruiting support for their various causes, each one for his own.

But is not the Transcendent also the Immanent ? It is ; but the Immanent Divine is likely to be passed over as a mere desirable ingredient of certain worldly objects or an admirable quality belonging to certain worldly activities,

if we do not grow to be increasingly aware of the Transcendent in Itself. The prophets and divine incarnations alone are securely beyond the danger. Whole chapters of the Gita rapturously proclaim the Immanent God, revealing Himself as the informing principle in all objects and the urge in all life towards a higher state of being. The Svetasvatara Upanishad recognizes God in "the deep-blue butterfly, the green parrot with red eyes, the storm-cloud with the lightning in its womb, the seasons and the seas". Energy and vitality are sought by the sages themselves. The Rishi begins the Kena Upanishad with an invocatory prayer for vigour of limbs, strength of organs and energy of senses and concludes by saying "Indeed all is Brahman of the Upanishads." In the Mundaka Upanishad, one who has attained is said to delight in the soul, to sport in the soul and to be a creative agent, *Kriyavan*. No form of wordly energy fails to find lodgement in Brahman, says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (IV-iii 19-32). Activity is not looked down upon. We are asked to cultivate every mode of awareness as an avenue to the Eternal (Kena Upanishad II. 4). Bhagavan has told us that devotion to ideals, including devotion to "humanity in general, ethical laws or even the idea of beauty" is *bhakti*, God-ward yearning (*Talks*, P. 31).

Some of us contrast serenity of soul, to its own advantage, with the turmoil of mind which an active life involves. Others contrast a life of service to humanity, to its own advantage, with vapid and futile religiosity. Both these antitheses are unwarranted. Indeed, in Vedanta, there can be no unresolvable antithesis at all. *Sat* and *asat* themselves are antonyms only at the verbal level. *Sat*, the Real which is within all appearance whatever, cannot be limited by an *asat*, the unreal, existing independently of it. Sri Sankara compares the unreal to the reeds which conceal the stream (the Real), but are nourished by the stream and are, therefore, a testimony to it. Bhagavan declares (*Forty Verses* v. 13) that the falsity which obscures the Real is itself

a falsity. He has said repeatedly in his *Talks* that, in the last resort, Maya, illusion and non-self are to be resolved into the Real. Our karma, "activities," are not outside this truth. The manner of resolving them is described in the Fourth Chapter of the Gita in the elaborately sustained simile of vedic ritual-sacrifice, a *yajna*. To feed what is comparatively lower into some higher principle is *yajna*. Thus, for example, the objects of the senses being fed into the fire of the senses produces art. In this manner, our whole life can be made into a *yajna*. All *yajna* is activity, work, and all work culminates in *jnana*, the higher awareness (Gita IV-32-33). This fire of *jnana* reduces all karma to ashes (IV-37), that is, it leaves no residue of *vasanas* and no commitment to involvement in further karma.

Escape from the Law of Karma, therefore, is not through any meticulous excellence of

the activity itself. First the fire must have been lit into which it is to be fed, the fire of spiritual life. Engagement in action, to begin with, wakes us to an awareness of our inner inadequacy, of our instability. Thus is first experienced the "felt absence" of something in ourselves. Thus the fire is lit, the dawning of the Spirit, the beginning of yoga. All our actions are then fed into this fire and are reduced to ashes, the Spirit shining alone. Spiritual life begins and culminates in Spirit. The spirit is the whole of the *yajna*, what prompts us to the sacrifice, the culmination of the sacrifice and all the elements of it. "The act of offering is God, the oblation is God. By God is it offered into the fire of God. God is that which is to be attained by him who realises God in his works (karma)" (Gita IV, 24). This is karma yoga in its completeness and perfection.

THE TWO WINDOWS

By A. RAO

Two windows are there : one looks on to space,
The other on the world, both blurred by thought
Of I and mine. This stopped ; now not a trace
Through that first window still was seen of ought,
And none to see, no seeker and no sought.

And yet no blankness this,

But unimagined bliss,

Its gateway not through terror but through Grace.

"The world and dissolution, day and night,

Both are eternally." "All things join hand

In cosmic dance," all things now seen aright :

The gnarled and sombre northern pine-trees stand,

And star-shaped jasmine of this sun-baked land ;

Through the breached ego-wall

Pure love flows out to all,

Even a stray dog draws love as a child might.

Is and Is not both at once are true,

"Although to sight they seem to alternate."

Life, death, pass over, but they are not you ;

Fate fashions life, while you, immaculate,

Remain unchanged beyond life, death and fate.

You feel love outward flow

Towards others, while you know

All otherness a dream, the Truth not-two.

THE SEQUENCE OF THE UPANISHADS

By SHAMBHU BHAT

There is a purpose or system in the sequence of the 108 major upanishads laid down in the Muktika Upanishad. It is not generally recognized by modern scholars because it accords neither with the sections of the Vedas to which the various upanishads belong nor with their chronological order. For instance, the first listed, the Ishavasya, belongs to the Yajur Veda, the second, the Kena, to the Sama, the third, the Katha, again to the Yajur, while the fourth and fifth, the Prasna and Mundaka, both belong to the Atharvana. Or, to take the question of chronology, the Brihadaranyaka, which is considered to be the oldest of all, is placed tenth on the list. Nevertheless there is meaning in the sequence and I wish to indicate it briefly here.

Indeed, it should be obvious that their belonging to different Vedas and different periods does not prevent a continuity of purpose running through them, as traditionally arranged, any more than the difference in age and provenance of the stones in a necklace prevents it from having a composite, harmonious beauty.

According to the Muktika Upanishad (and this is generally accepted by scholars), there are in all 1180 upanishads, one for each branch of the four Vedas: that is 21 for the Rig Veda, 109 for the Yajur, 1000 for the Sama and 50 for the Atharvana. Out of these, however, only 108 are listed in the Muktika as being the essence of the upanishads. This list also is generally accepted, though not its sequence. The further division by the Muktika of these 108 into ten more important and 98 less important is also generally accepted. It has indeed been greatly strengthened by the fact that Shankara chose these ten to write commentaries on.

No upanishad except the Muktika mentions any other by name. The Muktika, in giving a list of the 108, places itself last, and we may surmise that it was the latest written from its being able to give the list at all. Furthermore, it defines the purpose in studying the upanishads in the words of Sri Rama to his disciple Maruti as being to escape from the miseries of earthly life and attain Mukti.

Students would be well advised to study the Muktika first as an introduction to the others and then to go through them one by one in the order there laid down. What is not explained in one is clarified in the following. True, all of them deal with Brahman and samsara in a general way, but each has a different approach. Students who confine themselves to puzzling over individual mantras in each separate upanishad are like the traveler who can't see the wood for trees; they should also read them through as a continuous whole in the prescribed order.

The Mandukya, the 6th, is the real nucleus. The first five are meant to prepare the mind of the seeker and to build up a proper background for it. The first floor of the edifice is started with the seventh, the Taittiriya, and roofed with the tenth, the Brihadaranyaka. Then the 11th to 32nd complete the second storey of the edifice. The remainder complete the entire building and the garden in which it stands.

To be more precise: the Ishavasya, the first of all, welcomes the student on his own level. It says in effect, as a loving mother might to her son, "Your troubles are of your own making. Everything in the entire universe is pervaded and controlled by the Lord (Isha). Of course you have a right to a full span of life and should try to safeguard your

right, but do give up greed. Be content with what comes to you and what the Lord gives you and don't try to grab what is given to others. Grabbing only increases your troubles. Greed is at the root of them. Naturally, if you grab you will have to suffer "...and so on. It then proceeds to explain how all-embracing is the power of the Lord and how we cannot escape if we transgress the rules. No other upanishad gives this initial and essential advice.

The seeker's interest is thus awakened and in the second upanishad, the Kena, he asks: "Who is this Lord? Is it due to Him that we breathe, think, talk and live? Do the sun, moon and stars rise and set due to Him? Is it He who makes the wind blow and the fire burn?" "Yes, of course," he is told.

While in the Isha the Lord is referred to impersonally as That (Tat), the term 'Brahma' (That Great) is now introduced. Further, the seeker is recommended to learn the Vedas and Upanishads, these words being brought in for the first time. He is assured that if he lives light, without grasping, not only will he himself be happy but all around will esteem him (*samvānchhanti*). It is emphasised that renunciation of greed and knowledge of the Lord are to be achieved here and now, in this lifetime. If they are not, a great opportunity will have been lost. So the seeker is brought to ask to be taught the upanishads.

This is followed by the Katha with its interesting story of death and what comes after, in order to impress upon the seeker that not even by death can he escape the repercussions of his misdeeds in this life. He is told that the only escape from his troubles is by seeking the Lord and behaving in a way that will please Him. To reap the fruit of right conduct, he is told, is better than possessing all the world's wealth. What is right should be chosen in preference to what is pleasing. So he should follow the injunctions of the Vedas sincerely and give his full attention to what follows.

Having dealt with the seeker as an individual, the Upanishads now digress in the Prasna to a consideration of the universe, its origin and development, emergence and dissolution. The Sage explains to his six disciples, who seem to symbolise the six seasons, how the cycle moves. Significantly, he asks them to stay in his ashram for a full year, the annual cycle. The seeker is here made aware of his place in the cosmic cycle, of his birth and development and the inevitability of his living in the world and coming to terms with his environment.

The Mundaka then follows, explaining the sole effective source of knowledge and the distinction between *vidya* and *avidya*, knowledge and ignorance. It points out the practical means of attaining the goal. In this upanishad is explained how the boundless multiplicity of the world springs from a single basis, the universal *Suvarnam* or 'golden dust' which, by its endless permutations and combinations, produces the world of appearances and qualities, including life and motivation. This upanishad cautions the seeker that it is only by the Grace of the Lord that we can hope to find Him and escape falling into materialism.

And now the Mandukya, the great sixth, which, though short, explains effectively how both the macrocosm and microcosm emerge from the single basic essence and are dissolved again into it. It shows the seeker how unreal his own worldly pleasures and pains are and how they disappear when he realizes the Infinite in himself.

Just as the thread of a single unfolding purpose has been traced briefly through the first six upanishads read in the traditional order, so the earnest seeker will find it continuing through those that follow. Let him therefore study them as one continuous whole, remembering that the purpose of the entire sequence is to lead him "from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality."

THE TRUE KARMA YOGI

By Dr. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

Karma yoga is the doctrine of right activity and teaches us how to work without identifying ourselves with the worker. To the worldling such identification is the only motive for action. He always identifies himself with the doer. Karma yoga is the technique of inner development which helps a man to remain alert amidst the entangling and hypnotising influence of life. It prevents him from being absorbed by the apparent aims of life. It teaches him that it is not in reality he who acts but a power passing through him. The Maharshi said : "Doer-ship pertains to the body ; but you are not the body, so you are not the doer. Man is moved by another Power but he thinks he moves himself. He should make no effort either to work or to renounce work. Such effort is itself bondage." Whether to work or not is not left to a man's choice ; it rests with a higher Power.

Karma yoga is based on the truth that attending to the inner Self involves also attending to one's outer duties. Non-attachment is the basic principle, but this does not mean indifference. It means a conscious separation or aloofness from external life. It means not being stirred by desires (which are always of the ego) but letting true nature act freely through one. Acting under the spur of desire is a form of slavery and never brings peace. The karma yogi acts with the same zest as the ignorant person whose incentive is the fruit of his actions, but his motive is different. He asks nothing for himself, seeks nothing, but yet is active in life. He realizes that he is just an actor playing his role in life. He acts freely in whatever walk of life he may be placed. He does not fall asleep and mistake the part he is playing in the drama for himself. He does not let his role play him. He does not use life's events for gratification of

desires or moan over frustrations, both of which are manifestations of the ego, but practises non-identification. This frees him from the prison of the ego.

He is no longer a mass of habits, nor is he weighed down by duties to be discharged. He does not believe in the reality of himself as an individual. He has shaken off the delusion of an individual self and therewith the resultant delusion that this non-existent individual decides and acts. Everything happens as impersonally as dust arises with the wind. He knows that life is not explicable by itself. This theoretical understanding helps him to subdue his ego in practice. In whatever activity he may be engaged he constantly rejects the impulses which make up the ego until it becomes as powerless as the moon in the daylight sky.

He works on himself by refusing to be led by the impulses of the ego which insists on an out-going life. He knows that he is Spirit and that the ego is the cause of perplexity, making him identify himself with the activities of the body. The Maharshi says : "A man should not give up worldly activities but should give up desiring things for himself." And "The motto should be : active life, selfless action and continuous awareness of 'I'. The mind that is aware of 'I' may well attend to work of any kind. Such a mind is well protected. He who engages in the activities of life with the conviction 'I am the Self, I am not the body' is a karma yogi." A man should make no plans, for God Who has sent us here has His own plans and they alone will work. Does a karma yogi seek Liberation ? No ; how can there be liberation for one who was never bound ?

The karma yogi finds himself in the midst of an alien world. Life to him is as insubstantial as a dream. The guiding principle

of his life is that it shall not be made to subserve his I-concept. Any other service he will gladly do. He will not work with or for the ego. He is a co-worker with the higher Power. He works neither for himself nor mankind but as a willing tool in the hands of God. His work may therefore be termed worship or sacrifice. But how is he to find this higher Power or to know its will?

It is enthroned in his own mind. He feels it in his consciousness. It is by constant contact with it that he derives life and light. For the ignorant worldling it is veiled by pre-occupation with the ego's desires and fears (and all desires and fears are of the ego). Nothing has to be achieved to make it available; only the cloud of egoism that obscured it has to be cleared away.

The karma yogi recognizes the work that has to be done and is ready to do it as an act of worship. Thus he turns whatever work he does into divine service. The Maharshi says: "Haven't men achieved great things in this impersonal way?" Their achievements are in the world but they live in God.

Throughout his activity the karma yogi keeps in view the indivisible totality underlying all actions of all actors. His ego does not dictate his actions, but they are not for that reason limp or feeble. They may even be terrible and monstrous in the eyes of worldlings, for destruction also may be a necessary undertaking. "Yoga is skill in action" no matter what that action may be. The karma yogi responds to actions and situations spontaneously because his personal will is dead. It is the personal will that insists on the fruits of one's actions. The karma yogi is moved by a Divine Will which is Universal Harmony.

It is not necessary for the karma yogi to deny himself proper clothes, good food and satisfactory living conditions. Asceticism is

undertaken as a means of war against the ego, but without understanding it leads nowhere and may even be seized upon by the ego; and if there is understanding asceticism is not necessary. The Gita rejects it. King Janaka in all his glory is an example it gives of the karma yogi. Either a king or a beggar may be a karma yogi, but it is not easy for either. The Maharshi says: "Will power should mean the power to meet success or failure with equanimity." It should be used to destroy self-will. Inner detachment with outer activity, being "in the world but not of it" is the motto of the karma yogi.

The actor and his actions both issue simultaneously from one Source-Substance. The actions do not spring from the apparent actor. He is just as much not-self as they are. The Maharshi often explained that the mind can attend to outer activity at the same time as to the 'I' or Self. This is dhyana, and it is only the activity of one who is immersed in dhyana that can properly be called karma yoga. The actor and his activity and the emotions which give rise to his activity—love and hate, fear and desire—are all phenomena passing like a film on the screen of the Self. Bhagavan said: "Let the body accomplish the work for which it came. The work allotted to it will be extracted from it. Every one must take his allotted share and play his role in the life-drama." Karma yoga is the calm detached state where the Self is an observer of the activities of the pseudo-subject who is the apparent actor. This right view fully and securely held is termed Liberation or Enlightenment. The karma yogi striving towards this final consummation is ever on his guard against his deadly enemy the ego whom he may have to detect and expel in many various masks. When finally and securely attained the absence of ego is itself the presence of God, for God is no-ego and no-ego is God.

What we call a shadow, is, in fact, a shadow of a shadow.

— WEI WU WEI.

EQUALMINDEDNESS IN THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

By P. C. GOYAL

The Bhagavad Gita lays great stress on equalmindedness, exhorting us to look with the same eye on all, whether wise or foolish, high or low, friend or enemy, honest or dishonest. "The wise look alike upon a learned and righteous Brahmin, a cow, an elephant and a dog, and even the eater of a dog." (V. 18). And again: "He is esteemed who observes the same equanimity towards the benevolent, friends, foes, the impartial, neutrals, those of ill-will, relatives, the righteous and the unrighteous." (VI, 9).

What is the meaning of this for one who is living in the world, as distinct from a sadhu who has renounced the world? How can he put it into practice in his daily life of work, play and rest? Actually, it would be quite wrong to suppose that this precept is meant only for the sadhu. It is even more necessary for the householder.

The real meaning is that I should have equal regard for all other human beings, nay for all living creatures, that I should be free from prejudice, malice or contempt towards some or undue favour towards others. It does not mean observing similar conduct or behaviour towards all others but seeing the same Spirit of God pervading all life as an invisible unity within multifarious diversities. On that basis my external behaviour will vary according to the needs of times and circumstances and not be capricious or dictated by love or enmity, fear or favour.

Suppose, for instance, the organizers of a meeting give the chair and platform to the president and distinguished guests, while the audience sit on the floor below and a few fools or miscreants who try to disturb the meeting are ejected from the hall: have they violated the principle laid down in the Gita?

Not unless their behaviour is dictated by personal affection for the president and malice towards the miscreants. On the contrary, they should choose a fool or miscreant for president on the plea that no distinction should be made between the wise and foolish; they would be falsely interpreting the principle, and they would thus defeat the very object of the meeting.

I may be careless of my possessions when dealing with a person who is known to be honest but must take precautions with one who is dishonest. I may speak appreciatively to the former and harshly to the latter if the occasion so demands. But if the two of them are drowning in the river I shall see God in both and rescue them both without discrimination.

Suppose a mother has two sons and two daughters, all four of different ages. They will have different needs as regards clothing, food and education. It would be quite foolish of her to treat them all alike in these respects. She will be following the Gita principle correctly if she regards them with like affection and does what she can for the welfare of each one of them, giving them different things according to their different needs. She will only violate it if she discriminates mentally between them, treating the needs of one as less important than those of another.

This Gita precept is, then, a very sound rule of conduct in a world of outer variety masking inner unity. Even if I wanted to, it would be unwise and in some cases impossible to ignore physical differences and avoid making distinctions in my treatment of others. For instance I can't treat and feed my cow in the same way as my dog. I can't behave in the same way towards my mother, my wife and my daughter.

And in the case of a householder social as well as physical differences have to be observed in matters of conduct. I can't behave to my employer in the same way as to my office clerk.

Even my own body provides me with an excellent analogy for understanding the principle of equalmindedness. I don't use my mouth, hands and feet in the same way but discriminate between them. Indeed, I have to bestow

different kinds and degrees of attention on the different parts of my body. Nevertheless, I regard them all equally as mine, feel their various pains and comforts alike and have the same amount of concern for the entire body. The feeling of 'mineness' pervades every part of my body so long as I am alive though each part is used for a different purpose and treated in a different way.

THE ATMOSPHERE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

*From a monthly newsletter to parents by Eileen Bowden,
a member of Joel Goldsmith's 'Infinite Way' groups.*

There are right conditions, right climate, right atmosphere for all growing things and though children cannot be correctly classified as "things" they are not an exception to this natural law.

In the home this condition, this ground for growing, is prepared by the parents or in some cases one parent who is taking this responsibility. This ground consists of definite aids, suggestions and corrections administered to the child through the first formative years. With parents who have not developed any sense of feeling for the religious side of life, this "growing ground" consists mainly in instilling good social behaviour into their child and a measure of obedience to parental control and community laws and customs. This is not enough for parents in The Infinite Way because as we have developed a meditative, prayerful way of living, our perception deepens, our values change and we are eager to give our children the best. This best starts from the within. Character, love, loyalty and trust are developed and social conformities fall into their natural places as offshoots of what the child truly is.

This growing ground then provides its own climate which is love, fellowship, understanding and cooperation. A child feeling the security of this ground at home is always sent off to school "in quietness and confidence." The parent can start with the child at a very early age, sharing with it the parent's source of strength, well-being and love and eventually it can accept this same source for itself.

To illustrate this we are taught "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Isaiah 26:3. And again as the Master teaches: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. Certainly, you continue to teach your children the proper code of human conduct but remember that the most important part of parenthood is maintaining the spiritual atmosphere which the children absorb.

As the child begins to meditate for himself and the parent can begin to talk to him (at the 7-8-9-year-old levels) he can be shown how implanted within him are all the attributes needed for his success in life.

THE ARTIST AS SADHAKA

By JOHN SPIERS

The author, whose name rhymes with Shakespeare's, not with church spires, hails from Scotland but has made India his home for more than thirty years past. A disciple of Nataraja Guru, who is himself a disciple of the great Malayali reformer-saint Narayana Guru, Mr. Spiers is the founder-director of Narayana Gurukula at Kaggalipura, south of Bangalore and the founder-editor of the monthly '*Values*', published from Kaggalipura and already in its ninth year, through which he untiringly upholds true spiritual values. We are grateful to him for taking time off from his exacting occupations to write this article for '*The Mountain Path*'.

The Values that human beings hold dear are all for the sake of the Self. This is the verdict of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (II. iv. 1-5) stated in that wonderful dialogue between the Guru Yajnavalkya and his dear wife-disciple Maitreyi. And what applies to marital love also applies to art. All art is for the sake of the Self. The Self being *Brahman* or the Absolute, there cannot be art for its own sake, unless the "its" here is equated with the Absolute Self.

What people really mean when they talk of art for art's sake, is that art should not be for the sake of some unworthy end, should not be for some commercial tycoon who wants a picture to sell his cigarettes, nor should it be for a theological establishment who want to instil the fear of hell, nor should it be for encouraging the patriotic egotism of the nation-state. Art is degraded when it abandons the Self and forgets its proper aim. Like all human beings, the artist is seeking Self-knowledge. The only true art is in Self-expression, the endeavour of the Self to understand itself through all media.

Many attempts have been made to image the wonder-mystery of the Absolute (*Brahman*). We have the image of the Great Mathematician, or the Great Architect of the Universe, the former by the physicist Jean and the latter by the Freemasons. Narayana Guru likened the universe to the work of a Great Artist, a living painting. Putting all these images together we reach the same central Source. The

notion is further augmented by the twin chapters in the middle of the *Bhagavad Gita*, those called Unitive Contemplation as Royal Science and a Crowning Secret (*Raja-vidya Raja-guhya Yoga*) and Unitive Recognition of Absolute Values (*Vibhuti-yoga*). One chapter deals with *jnana* or pure unqualified wisdom, and the other with *vijnana* or wisdom expressed or applied. And, as the first verse of these chapters states, both must be taken together when we want to be free from whatever is evil or inauspicious.

Sri Ramana Maharshi used the analogy of the movie. If the forgotten white screen is the *jnana* aspect, and the projected picture the *vijnana* aspect, the wisdom here is remembering the entire scheme, the total situation, screen, picture, light and the enjoyment, and seeing it all as the production of the Self, in which the Self is screen and film and all. And this can be understood at the cosmological end of Nature, or ontologically or psychologically as the individual's own movie show. In any case all aspects brought together result in the high art called Yoga.

The Self will not brook duality. All is unity for the Self. To see duality, to see one-sidedly, to see the picture and not the screen, to see the screen and ignore the picture, leads to distortions, exaggerations and suffering at one or other pole of the single Self. The sensual or *vijnana* side can be over-emphasized, as also the austere *jnana* side. On one side the *bon vivant*, on the other side the ascetic. Both

have really lost the way, which is at neither end, nor in the middle, but by apprehending both sides together. This is Yoga and neither Caliban nor Savonarola can be said to have been lovers of art !

For the artist, his own projected world, his private dream, is at once his glory and his danger as a seeker of reality and Self-understanding. He must become more than a dreaming artist. He must become a wide-awake philosopher. The artist is on the same beam as the philosopher, but the philosopher (again in its original meaning) is ahead of him because he is disciplined. This discipline is to discover the supreme Order called "Beauty" if you like, but not necessarily the same as that beautiful which is counterpart of the ugly. As Plato describes the process in the *Theatetus*, the Guru's task, in the words of Socrates, is to be a midwife to the art-children born of the artist, and (with what travail to the artist) to destroy the unworthy. What spiritual courage is implied here !

For the artist, as for all wisdom-seekers, there are two paths, one leading to further bondage and cyclic restraint (*samsara*) and the other to freedom. Kant, in an early work, *Beobachtungyngen ueber das Gefuel des Schoenen und Erhabenen* (trans. by John T. Goldthwait, Univ. of California, 1960, as *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*) describes these two paths from the point of view of the artist :

"Tall oaks and lonely shadows in a sacred grove are sublime ; flower beds, low hedges and trees trimmed in figures are beautiful. Night is sublime, day is beautiful. Temperaments that possess a feeling for the sublime are drawn gradually, by the quiet stillness of a summer evening as the shimmering light of the stars breaks through the brown shadows of night and the lonely moon rises into view, into high feelings of friendship, of disdain for the world, of eternity. The shining day stimulates busy fervour and a feeling of gaiety. The sublime moves, the beautiful charms . . . The

sublime must always be great ; the beautiful can also be small. The sublime must be simple, the beautiful can be adorned and ornamented, a great height is just as sublime as a great depth, except that the latter is accompanied with the sensation of shuddering, the former with one of wonder. Hence the latter can be the terrifying sublime, and the former the noble."

Instances can be multiplied of this broad division of the two paths. The one is the sacred peace of Arunachala and the other the entertainments of the social world of Tiruvannamalai. The sublime heights, and the horizontal though perhaps charming life of the town. On the vertical side the music of the Tamil Alvars and on the horizontal the National Anthem. Or the numinous eternal image of the Yogi of Mohenjodaro's seal, and the statues of public heroes and politicians. Or the Taoist paintings of the classical Tang and Sung periods of China and the paintings of today which glorify the Peking regime. Or the great tragedies of master dramatists like Euripides and Kalidasa and Shakespeare, and the romantic comedies of the cinema.

Sublime art, then, takes us out of the relative world into the eternal, and we finally arrive at the greatest art of all. This is the transformation of the individual from a condition of enslavement to a condition of emancipation. Every artistic device can be used with skill to this end. This is the supreme art of a Buddha, a Jesus, a Sankara, a Maharshi or any of the grand Gurus of humanity anywhere. Their records are there in many languages, of how this is to be done, and they speak with amazing concordance.

But just here trouble arises, for very few artists are by nature philosophers as well. And yet, if they are not to lead themselves astray (not to speak of their admirers), philosophers they must learn to be. Artists have the germ of absolutism in their own character, by nature. That is why they are fit to be knowers of the Absolute. But invariably they are in a state

of revolt, wild and uncontrollable, opposed to all authority. For them to reach the terminus of spiritual seeking, they must harness their daemon in the service of the quest for enlightenment.

Not all artists are fortunate enough to find a spiritual guide. Euripides was the friend and pupil of Socrates. Tagore reached for the *Upanishads*. The philosophic or sublime cream of the artists on the whole is very little. Only ten per cent of Wordsworth is of this order. like *Tintern Abbey* or the *Intimations*. William Blake, so absolutist a revisionist of Christian thought, got lost in a barbaric mythology of his own. Millions of paintings are preserved in the museums of Europe and USA and the modern turnover is as profuse as in literature. Yet how much of it would stand the test of a Socratic midwife? Most is junk, which misleads.

For this reason, Plato in the *Republic* was right in cracking down on the danger to mankind of the unphilosophic poet or artist. Art can be delightfully attractive, but of what use if it is not true? Music can stir people to war just as easily as it can raise the spirit to contemplation and invoke the sense of the holy. Uncontrolled, art is a menace to wisdom. However unpalatable to the artistic temperament this may be, the artist must be subordinate to wisdom teaching and to the Guru. Nobody knew this better than Plato himself, literary genius and also a pupil of the "midwife" Socrates.

But why pick out the artist at all for special treatment? It is because he is one of the three types who by grace of natural temperament, can be led more easily toward Self-realization. Plotinus mentions this in the *Enneads* (I. iii. 1), and places the artist between the born lover and the born philosopher. About the artist, Plotinus says :

"He must be shown that what ravished him was . . . not some one shape of beauty but the All-Beauty, the Absolute Beauty; and the truths of philosophy must be implanted in him

to lead him to faith in that which, all unknowing, he holds within himself."

The artist and the philosopher are not opposed, as is the case with the man of action and the contemplative. They belong to the same grade. And following Plotinus, we may add to art and philosophy what is called love, adoration or devotion, that principle known in India as *bhakti*, and defined by Sankara as "seeking after one's own proper nature" or "inquiry into the true principles of one's own Self" (*Vivekachudamani* 31-32).

Benedetto Croce makes the daring statement that art and language cannot be separated. Creation begins with expression and all expression is linguistic. With the uttering of the Word, *Sabda*, wisdom and the universe itself bursts into being as the Panini doctrine of *sphota* declares. The Absolute and the Word are the same. "In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," as the opening verse of the Gospel of St. John puts it.

It follows that philosophic expression, as revealed by a Guru or wisdom teacher, must be the highest art. The world's best known philosophical text-book is also a *Gita* or song. The *Bhagavad Gita* itself in referring to *Brahma-vidya* says so :

"Sung by *rishis* in many ways, severally and distinctly in (different) metres, and also in the aphoristic words of the *Brahma-sutras* replete with reasonings and positively determined." (xiii. 4).

Sage after sage, all over the world, from the Ch'an Patriarchs of ancient China to the Sufis of Persia, have ecstatically sung the praises of the Absolute. In India from the days of the anonymous *rishis* of the *Upanishads* down through the sages to Sri Ramana Maharshi and Narayana Guru, both of South India, we have glorious contemplative songs about philosophy and the ultimate joy of liberation.

On this grand theme, whose illustration is endless, let us conclude with the song of one

of the Persian poet-sages, Jami, from his *Tuhfatu'l-Abrar*, where he describes the end of the pilgrimage of the artist :

"Beware ! say not 'He is All-beautiful,
And we His lovers.' Thou art but the glass,
And He the Face confronting it, which casts
Its image on the mirror. He alone
Is manifest, and thou in truth art hid.
Pure Love, like Beauty, coming but from
Him,

Reveals itself in thee. If steadfastly
Thou canst regard, thou wilt at length
perceive

He is the mirror also—He alike
The Treasure and the Casket. 'I' and
'Thou'

Have here no place, and are but phantasies
Vain and unreal. Silence ! for this tale
Is endless, and no eloquence hath power
To speak of Him. 'Tis best for us to love,
And suffer silently, being as naught."

ESOTERIC ASPECTS OF ISLAM

By DR. K. M. P. MOHAMED CASSIM

Islam as a religion or philosophy belongs to humanity. Man cannot be considered as a bundle of psychological complexes or as a biological entity, as the mystery of man is his inter-relation with the divine principle which is eternal and transcendental. Islamic philosophy emphasises the importance of mental purification and the spiritual integration of man so as to function in the universe in tune with the Infinite. Man's progress lies in the direction of attaining that state of blessedness which is divine in essence.

It is to be noted that in accordance with *ma'rifa* — the esoteric aspect of Islamic Philosophy :—

(1) The concept of belief demands not mere verbal declaration the existence of Reality, but inner intensive awareness of the oneness with the Supreme through direct realization.

(2) Prayer should not be conceived as an act of worship in a mechanical way, but an attitude of devotion which elevates one to the height of contemplation in which exalted state the ego is negated in absorption in the Supreme.

(3) The correct understanding of Fasting implies the close self-observation of the mind in a detached manner without getting involved in any form of temptation.

(4) The right attitude of Charity is not only the feeling of compassion in helping the poor on a material level, but also the spontaneity of a pure heart which radiates the light of wisdom and serenity for the spiritual upliftment of mankind.

(5) The significance of Pilgrimage consists in the sacredness of keeping the mind detached from worldly affairs for the attainment of spiritual liberation.

It is what I am that is seeing,
And I have ten-thousand eyes.

— WEI WU WEI.

THE POET SAINT TULSIDAS¹

By T. KRISHNAJI

The keynote of Hindu religious life is the concept of dharma or righteous conduct. The word has no exact equivalent in English. Dharma may be defined as spiritual life expressed in socio-ethical conduct. It is the bedrock and support of human life. The two great Hindu epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, inculcate dharmic life by precept and example. Yudhisthira in the Mahabharata is a great exemplar of dharma ; but Sri Rama in the Ramayana is its very personification. His story was chronicled by Valmiki, the great poet-sage, and he has been worshipped throughout India ever since. Various poet-saints rendered Valmiki's Sanskrit Ramayana into the regional languages, and it was Tulsidas who did into Hindi.



Tulsidas was born about 1583 in a Brahmin family of Rajpur. He was orphaned at an early age and went to Benares to prosecute his studies. Before he reached his sixteenth year he had mastered all the Sanskrit scriptures.

¹ Referred to also as Tulsi, Tulasi, Tulasidas and Tulasidasa.

On completion of his studies he was married. He loved his wife, Ratnavali, so passionately that he could not brook separation from her even for a few days. Once she went on a visit to her parents who lived on the opposite bank of the Jumna and, unable to endure his absence, he plunged into the river, then swollen with the rains, and swam across. He presented himself, dripping and exhausted, before her and told her of the danger he had faced to come to her. Far from being pleased, Ratnavali rebuked him sharply : "Aren't you ashamed to run after me like this ? Such attachment to this perishable body of mine is misplaced. Life's misery would end for you if only you had such love and yearning for Sri Ram." Then occurred one of those sudden transformations one finds in the lives of saints. Her words opened his eyes and in a sudden access of Divine Love he turned and walked out of the house, going forth as a homeless wanderer in search of God.

Tulsidas went on pilgrimage to one after another of the great shrines of India before returning to Benares. In course of time he became famous as a poet and saint. His lyrical and didactic poems have been collected in volumes known as 'Vinaya Patrika', 'Dohavalī' and 'Kavitavalī'. Many of his songs are still commonly sung throughout the Hindi speaking parts of India to-day. But it is on his 'Ramayana' that his fame mainly rests. He composed this in the space of 31 months at Ayodhya, the traditional town of Sri Ram, about 1692.

Being himself a poet and saint, Tulsidas like the other great renderers of the Ramayana into regional languages, did not merely translate Valmiki but departed freely from him when so inclined. Valmiki depicts Rama as an ideal man, but still a man. Although his wo-

is known as the 'Ramayana', he himself refers to it as *Sitāyāh Charitam Mama*, 'The Chronicles of Sita'. But Tulsidas portrays Rama as a Divine Being and calls his work *Raghunātha Gāthā*, 'The Story of Raghunath'². The Christian mystic Jacob Boehme has said: "God must become Man, there must be a birth of the light of God in the soul, in order that the soul may live its highest." Tulsī's Ramayana shows that God-Man on earth and inspires the reader outwardly to devotion to Him, inwardly to development of the Divine in his own heart.

It is said that all who die at Benares obtain Liberation, having received initiation into the *Tāraka Mantra* from Lord Siva. In Tulsī's Ramayana it is the Lord Siva Himself who tells the story to His spouse Parvati.

Poetically it is a work of the highest art. The poet shows rare skill in merging Sanskrit words into Hindi, while the prefatory Sanskrit verses at the head of each chapter show his mastery of the classical language. The poetic rhythms and vivid turns of phrase thrill the reader. It is as great a work of art as of devotion. Millions of copies have been sold and it would be hard to find a home in the U.P. without one. It ranks among the greatest works in the literature of the world.

Tulsidas was one of the pioneers of the invocation of the Divine Name as a means of sadhana. Indeed, he says in one place that, whereas Sabari obtained Liberation at the hands of Rama, many sinners have found it by merely

calling on the name of Rama. Although he was not a philosopher, this was an important contribution to Hindu religious practice. Dr. Ranade, a recent renowned mystic and philosopher,³ writes that: "His remarkable exposition of the relation between such fundamental conceptions as Nāma, Rūpa, Saguna and Dhyāna mark him out as a thinker of a very high order. He says that Name and Form are only attributes of God, and that may be regarded as Tulasidas's contribution to Indian philosophic thought."⁴

The reputation of Tulsidas as a poet-saint spread. Divine Grace flowed on him and many miracles are reported in his life, including the revival of a dead person. When he went to Mathura, the traditional town of Lord Krishna, the latter appeared before him in the form of Rama.

There was a galaxy of saints, poets and statesmen in his time, by whom he was highly esteemed. Surdas, the blind poet-saint, Nabhaji who wrote 'Bhakta Vijaya', Nandadas, another poet-saint, the great Advaitic scholar Madhusudan Saraswati, were some of his friends. The Emperor Akbar and his ministers, Mansingh and Birbal, were great admirers of his. The spot where he lived in Benares is known as Tulsighat. He lived to the great age of 90, when he left his body at the junction of the rivers Asi and Ganga, leaving to posterity his immortal Ramayana and a wealth of devotional lyrics still commonly sung by millions of devout Hindus.

² A name for Rama, meaning 'Lord of the race of Raghus'.

³ For an account of whose life and achievements see the Book Review section of our issue of January 1964.

⁴ Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 13.

We are miserable unless the sun is shining, but if the sun were shining within we should not even notice whether the feeble phenomenal sun was shining or not.

— WEI WU WEI.

THE MODERN REVIVAL OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

By GILBERT HENRY GEDGE

Mr. Gedge is no more a theorist but has been known for the past fifteen years as one of the leading practisers of spiritual healing in England. We are deeply grateful to him for finding time to write this article for us.

What do we mean by the term "Spiritual Healing"? I think the best way to answer that question is to relate one or two actual instances. For example, a man suffering from what had been diagnosed as "slipped disc" walked into the room of one who was described as a spiritual healer and asked for help. He said he did not know much about what the healer did, but his sister was sure the healer could help him. The patient was told to lie on his face on a divan, the healer placed his hands on the patient's back and, after audibly surrendering himself and the patient to Jesus Christ, called on Christ to do His perfect work in the patient. Some five minutes later the patient got up free from pain and feeling perfectly well, and remained so for over two years. He then had a slight relapse but was treated again by the same healer and again the trouble vanished, this time apparently permanently.

Another example, this time of what is known as "absent treatment". A girl of five years with an unfortunate home life had just started school when she suddenly developed attacks of bad temper, screaming and severe depression, and tearing out her hair. After psychiatric and hospital treatment she rapidly got worse and lost the use of her legs. The trouble was thought to be either a tumour on the brain or disintegration of the nerves, and she was given two years to live. The child was sent home and a friend of the family asked the spiritual healer mentioned above for help. He placed the child's name on his prayer list and the next day there was already a marked improvement. This continued, and three weeks later she walked unaided across the room. Within

three months the child was able to run about and the fits of temper had practically ceased. Today that girl is happily married with a child of her own. In this case the healer never saw the patient; the work, was done entirely by faith and prayer.

These two cases just cited are typical of the two main methods employed in what is correctly described as spiritual healing. Unfortunately this term is also often used to describe healing work done by spiritualists, who usually claim to be guided by the spirits of those who have passed on, and whose work could thus be more correctly described as psychic. The most notable exponent of this method at present is Harry Edwards, who undoubtedly has produced many remarkable results. He claims to work under the guidance of Lister and Pasteur, and specifically states that others can learn to work similarly under the guidance of other discarnate minds, whom he calls spirit operators.

The birth of the spiritualist movement about the middle of the last century coincided with the beginning of what is now known as the Christian Science Church. Its founder, Mary Baker Eddy, taught that God is omnipresent Divine Mind, and in her book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures", she says that all is Spirit and "matter is an error statement". She goes on to say that matter is a "mortal illusion", and that we lose consciousness of matter as we approach Spirit and Truth (pp. 273-282). Thus Christian Scientists deny the reality of the flesh, sickness and disease, and affirm the all-

of God and His perfection. They go on to claim that by so doing they can bring that perfection into manifestation in the physical realm.

There is no doubt that both the Spiritualists and the Christian Scientists have produced some remarkable results, and whatever we may think of their respective methods we have to admit that they both played a significant part in compelling the world to recognise that there are unseen forces on which man can call for healing of both mind and body. The orthodox churches eventually found themselves compelled to consider their own position in regard to healing.

For centuries the church had been concerned almost solely with the welfare of man's soul; but now the world began to ask why the church was not fulfilling the behest of Jesus to heal the sick, cast out devils, and do the greater works He promised that His followers should do. In the early years of the Christian church spiritual healing, or what is now known as Divine healing, was practised by its adherents as a vital part of their religion. They believed that Jesus Christ by His victory over death was still available to them in all His mighty power, and that they could call upon His power by faith, by belief in His inevitable response to their call for help. As the Church became wealthy and powerful after being made the state religion of Rome, however, the capacity to call on Divine power for healing declined, and in consequence healing ceased to be regarded as part of the Church's ministry. Through the centuries there were a few individuals who practised Divine healing—healing in the name and through the power of Jesus Christ—but they were exceptions. Men like George Fox and John Wesley who had a living faith in the presence of God as an available all-loving Power have appeared from time to time, and their very presence has spread healing, but the world took scant notice of them.

Men's minds are being rapidly awakened to the realisation of forces beyond the physical

realm which has previously been the limit of the majority of mankind's horizon. New teachers have arisen whose main theme has been the development of the consciousness of the immanence of God, the consciousness of the presence of God within man, and the realisation of the power with which that consciousness endows man. We are now waking up again to the fact that not only does man's thought affect his body for good or ill, according to the nature of his thoughts, but also that we are gods in the making and can call upon and use Divine powers to an extent that modern man has not previously dreamed of.

This has necessarily involved a new conception of the nature of prayer. Even the churches are now realising that a beseeching prayer to an outside God is by no means the most effective method of praying. Instead, God is realised as an all-pervading, all-loving, ever available Power which responds to man's faith in It and in It's responsiveness. Men are looking again at the words of Jesus Christ: "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe, that ye receive them, and ye shall have them". (Mark 11. 22-24). Many people are now proving these words—though few have yet risen to the height of casting a mountain into the sea! Many, however, are now able to cast out sickness and disease in varying degrees by their growing faith, and I see no reason why we should not expect greater triumphs in the future.

But, such progress and the development of the necessary faith requires regular spiritual practice—practice in realising the presence of God within us, and in the use of the power of our own thought, word and faith. Though mankind as a whole is still largely engrossed in the demands of the flesh and the material

world, we here on this earth are actually at school to learn to develop and manifest our divinity, and the essential part of that training lies in becoming increasingly conscious of one-ness with the Divine Omnipresence. There is no substitute for this practice, but if persevered with it will bring us into the realisation of the Divine Christ at the centre of our being. All over the world there are signs of the unfolding of the Christ consciousness and the healing works that follow from that consciousness. In recent years we have had remarkable demonstrations of that in our midst. Men like Brother Mandus, Oral Roberts, George Jeffries, women like Rebecca Beard, Agnes Sanford and Elsie Salmon—all have done great work to bring to millions of people the realisation that the power of Christ is just as available today as ever and can be called upon and used by dedicated souls. They have proved that the works of Christ can be done and still are being done today. They have reminded us that ours is the responsibility for increasing those works by stepping out boldly on our faith and attempting to do the things Jesus Christ said His follower should do. If we begin we shall find that Divine Power is aiding us.

The more enlightened members of the churches, both clergy and laity, our becoming newly aware of this responsibility, and in comparatively recent years there has been an increase in organisations for the study and practice of spiritual or Divine healing. Notable among these are the Guild of Health and the Guild of St. Raphael, both of which attempt to bring clergy and doctors together in healing work. Such organisations have their uses; but no organisation can of itself claim or demonstrate that it has healing power. Healing is not a matter of organisation; true healing can come only from conscious awareness of one-ness with God and dedication to God's purpose. That purpose is always directed to the more perfect expression of life on every plane of being. So often when speaking of healing we tend to confine its significance to

the body. But man is more than body. His mind and spirit also — and God's purpose embraces all three phases of man's being. We are now realising more and more that the body is more often than not the reflection of the state of mind and soul. We are learning that wrong thoughts and emotions need to be replaced by thoughts and emotions attuned to the omnipresence of God if the body is to express wholeness. Though sudden and dramatic healing of the body is often obtained through spiritual means, such healing is seldom permanent unless accompanied by real change in the soul of the sufferer. This change may be simply a realisation of Divine forgiveness, a new comprehension of Ineffable Love, a new awareness of the all-ness of God, or a new realisation of the presence of Christ within and of one-ness with Him. These are the ultimate ends of Divine healing, and there is no evidence of any of them then the healing is not Divine, even though the body may be temporarily healed.

In the practice of Divine healing what is known as the laying on of hands is widely used. In this practice the healer sincerely believes that through the contact of his hands with the patient the spiritual power upon which he calls is focussed in a more direct and more effective way for the healing work to be done. Jesus used this method Himself and obviously intended His followers should do so. But, it would seem that often something deeper and more significant than mere physical healing occurs through the laying on of hands. Often there is a dramatic change in the recipient's soul. But for that to happen there must be real consecration and sincerity on the part of both healer and recipient in a desire to realise one-ness with God and receive His blessing. Future developments in Divine healing will depend ultimately on man's complete realisation of that one-ness. That is not a matter of practising a particular technique, however. It begins with getting rid of the little human self and letting the Divine Self manifest in and through us. Whether the ministration of the

ling is through the laying on of hands, realisation, affirmative prayer or intercession, really effective results will come only if the ministrant is completely surrendered and dedicated to Christ. That is not merely a mental process; it must include the whole man and must emanate from the heart.

Certainly some healing results from purely mental action, which metaphysicians would attribute to the fact that this is primarily a

universe of Mind. But such healing action does not extend to the soul and spiritual realms of man's being, though it may sometimes appear to do so. Eventually, however, a change of heart must be brought about which cannot be done by purely mental means. Only as we find one-ness with the Eternal Heart of Love within our own heart will the Eternal Life manifest in all its perfection, beauty and glory on all planes of being.

PERMISSION WITHHELD

By RAMAKRISHNA G. KULKARNI

I had a great desire for a fully realized Guru and was in search of one, when by chance (really by the guidance of Bhagavan) I came upon a Gujarati book by one Madhavanand of Baroda in which he spoke highly of his visit to Sri Ramanashram. I therefore wrote to the Sarvadhikari of the Ashram expressing my desire to have darshan of Bhagavan. I received a favourable reply and accordingly left for the Ashram. This was in 1944. I stayed there for five days. During the first two days I was annoyed to find all the worst vasanas (latent tendencies) in me coming to the surface. I therefore prayed to Bhagavan to wipe out my sins and initiate me as his disciple, not being aware as yet that he had already done so and that my heart was being purified by the powerful current of his Grace. I appreciated this only on the third day, when peace began to flood my heart. There was such a surging of peace that on the fifth morning I stood before Bhagavan, prostrated, and expressed my feeling of complete peacefulness. Thereupon Bhagavan raised his hand over my head and blessed me. After that I

returned home. Through his Grace, awareness of the Self has continued since then and my sadhana is proceeding.

I had his darshan again a few years later, on the occasion of consecrating the Matrubhuteshwar Temple at the Ashram.

In the year 1956, six years after Bhagavan had left the body, I decided to renounce home life and live as a sadhu at some lonely place on the banks of the Ganges. While searching for a suitable place I wrote to the Ashram about it and, through the inspiration of Bhagavan, received a reply that I should pay a visit there before deciding to settle down elsewhere. Accordingly I went again to Sri Ramanashram. Arrived there, I sat in meditation before Bhagavan's samadhi (shrine) during the night. While doing so I experienced a voice from Bhagavan telling me that it was not yet time for me to renounce the world. I had therefore to cancel my plans for doing so and to return home. Since then I have been eagerly awaiting a message from Bhagavan that the time has come for my renunciation.

THE SPIRITUAL TRADITION OF PRESBYTERIANISM

By REV. JOHANSEN BERG

In our issue of January 1964 Father Lazarus, writing on 'The Spiritual Tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church', described Gandhi's statement that "The message of Jesus is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, unadulterated and taken as a whole" as a popular heresy. "The Sermon on the Mount," he said, "is not the Gospel that the early Church taught... the original Gospel was not a sermon and not just the Beatitudes. It was thrilling news, glad tidings of great joy for all peoples of the world." The impression given is not that he meant to belittle the Sermon on the Mount but to protest against belittling Christianity by confining it to the ethical part of Christ's message.

The following article by a Presbyterian minister asserts that "Mahatma Gandhi was quite right to see in the Sermon on the Mount a summary of the teaching of Jesus," but adds the qualifying words "regarding practical action." It continues with the further qualification: "This is not to be confused with the message of salvation..." The difference, therefore, between this viewpoint and that of Father Lazarus seems to be mainly one of emphasis.

A recent article in this magazine on the spiritual traditions within one particular denomination might have given rise to the question what is the spiritual tradition, if any, in the Presbyterian Church. To speak of spirituality is to speak of the essence of Christianity and so to speak of it in relation to one particular branch is in a sense to narrow the issue falsely, since much is common tradition; but provided we remember that it may be worth while to think of the special stress that any part of Christendom has made.

The Presbyterian Church has a rich heritage of teaching. John Calvin is noted for the comprehensiveness of the system of theology he propounded, and he was very much aware of the need for right beliefs. Like the other Reformers, he sought the truth as expressed in Holy Scripture. His tradition of careful teaching was continued in all the Reformed Churches and we see the importance in Scotland, in England, in France and other places of the catechism as a method of teaching. The primary standard of faith in Presbyterian churches is still Holy Scripture and the necessity of teaching it is as central as ever. We find ourselves, therefore, still making the great affirmations that God has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that in Jesus Christ we

find our God and Saviour; that his life on earth began with the miraculous birth from the Virgin Mary, found its climax in his sacrificial death on the cross, by which we are redeemed, and by his glorious resurrection which speaks to us of the hope of eternal life. We recognize that Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit has been fulfilled and that Jesus founded the Holy Catholic Church, the body of all those who believe in Him in sincerity and truth.

The Presbyterian Church has always guarded this scriptural truth but it has also stressed that right belief bears fruit in right action. To believe without action casts doubt on the sincerity of the belief. Certainly this is so in the case of belief in Christ, for he taught that faith is not only a set of beliefs but also a way of life. Mahatma Gandhi was quite right to see in the Sermon on the Mount a summary of the teaching of Jesus regarding practical action. This is not to be confused with the message of salvation, which is the astounding and assuring news that our salvation does not depend on the sum of what we achieve in this life but rather it is the free gift of God. Our salvation has already been earned for us on the Cross of Calvary, in the suffering of the perfect man, true God, Jesus Christ; our good actions are a response to that wonderful love.

How can we who have received so much not desire greatly to do something ourselves? Perhaps it was one of the greatest puzzles that Gandhi had to work out, that men and women who acknowledged such a wonderful Person as our Lord could be so indifferent to need themselves. He did well to challenge their sincerity, for Jesus made clear that he wished his followers to behave as he did. We must never judge Jesus by their failures.

Right beliefs must therefore go hand in hand with right actions. A firm faith results in joyful service. These are parts of the life of spirituality. The Bible makes it clear that all the followers of Jesus Christ are called to be saints—holy men—spiritual men. St. Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians (ch. 11, v. 19) puts it: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God", and he goes on to speak of them as "a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." It can never be suggested that there are grades within Christianity and that some must aim for a higher righteousness; all must aim for no less than sainthood. Each is called to the spiritual life and each must be in some measure a mystic—a man who seeks to know God directly, to speak with Him face to face. Here is the secret of right belief and right action. Few men can be truly fired at second hand. It is one thing to be told of a Saviour, but much more wonderful to meet him. All the books written about wonderful personalities in history go only so far in conveying the reality of the personalities to those who did not have the good fortune to meet them. With Jesus it is different. He is not a dead hero but a living Lord. We can and do meet him in the present and have confirmed for ourselves all that the disciples taught and wrote.¹ Here is the confirmation of our beliefs and the mainspring of our actions. Right beliefs and right actions spring from a true experience.

The secret of John Calvin was not his clear, systematic brain or his teaching ability but his experience of spiritual reality. It is this that gives depth to his teaching on Holy Communion, which for him is not only a remembrance of the greatest sacrifice ever made, not only a sign of the greatest act of love, not only a common meal to express our own thanks and self-offering to God, but also a true feeding upon the body and blood of Jesus Christ, a real communion with our Saviour. For Presbyterians, spirituality has often found most deep expression in this Holy Communion. Some of the accounts of the old Scottish Communions speak of the tremendous sense of mystery and the real sharing in things divine. Whatever may keep Christians apart, here is an experience so deep, so meaningful, so mysterious and so wonderful that it gives all who share it a unity that nothing at all can break.

Spirituality often finds its expression in solitude and silence because the wonder of God's presence is such that one merely wants to rest in it. Words and actions become superfluous. But we must reckon with the call of God. Here we find most appropriate some words of Richard Baxter, a 17th Century Christian who might well claim to belong to the Reformed tradition but who preferred no other label than 'Christian'. He writes in his 'Autobiography': "I am more and more pleased with a solitary life; and though in a way of self-denial I could submit to the most public life for the service of God when he requireth it, and would not be unprofitable that I might be private, yet I must confess it is much more pleasing to myself to be retired from the world and have very little to do with men and to converse with God and conscience and good books." There is indeed a rhythm in life. We retire into solitude that we may speak and listen to God; but then he gives us his commands and we often have to go into the world to act. Here is the reason why some of the greatest saints and mystics of the Church have been men of action—St. Paul, St. Ninian, St. Francis, St. Richard Baxter, St. John.

¹ The author, as a Christian minister, expresses the view in which he has been trained, that this is true only of Christ. — EDITOR.

Bunyan, St. David Livingstone, St. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Maria, St. Kagawa — belonging to all ages and all traditions, but to the one Jesus Christ.

For Presbyterians these things stand together in a religion that is essentially simple. Right beliefs — drawn from Holy Scripture and having their source in experience. Our belief in the Trinity and the Virgin Birth and in the Holy Spirit as proceeding from Father and Son — all this is important, but far more vital than intellectual assent is a true experience of union with Christ. We worship God in simplicity; no need for elaborate ceremonial though we do not necessarily object to such. Jesus Christ lived a simple life and we can worship him in simplicity provided we worship him in sincerity. All stand before God equal; there is no gradation of people and priests, or within the ministry. Since Christ died for all, distinctions are needless unless they are distinctions of gifts, our specialisation within the work of the kingdom. All are equally children of God and to each is given a task — different perhaps but not higher or lower. The simplicity of worship reflects in simplicity of action. Worship is,

after all, not simply prayers in a church building. Worship is also expressed in service. In the teaching of Jesus this means that where there is need we seek to meet it. That is the only condition — need. Who or why does not concern us. And the experience that underlies it is simple too — meeting a person Jesus Christ. We find that his promises are sure and that his power is available to his followers. The age of miracles is not past; as Jesus healed in times past, so now where there is the prayer of faith our Lord hears and responds. That is why the most wonderful cures happen even in our day.

Who would not be willing to give themselves to such a Lord and Saviour? An experience of him gives the deepest joy and in his service we find peace. Here is true spirituality — the peace and joy of the experience of Christ and the service of people. That we claim as Presbyterians, but it is the possession of all Christians. Indeed, the hope for the unity of Christendom and for peace and joy for the world rest solely on this — meeting with Jesus Christ.

PRADAKSHINA

By DR. K. B. PISPATI

We were a party of about 15 and it was a full moon night, so some one suggested that we should walk round Arunachala in what is called Giri-Pradakshina. As the party included the Maharaja of Dharampur and the princesses and other ladies, some of whom had never walked such a distance, I was a bit worried and arranged for several horse-carts to follow us round so as to give a lift to any one who got tired.

It was a wonderful walk. We all kept together and sang devotional songs by and to Bhagavan as we went along the moonlit road. Most of us had decided to go barefoot, as one is supposed to, but it was a wonderful walk in spite of that and we got home earlier than we expected. It was unforgettable. I was expecting to have to treat blisters and aching legs next day, but strangely enough there were no complaints and every one seemed hale and hearty. I never thought that these ladies who seldom walked farther than from bedroom to bathroom would do the eight to nine mile walk without any trouble. To my mind it was like a miracle.

“RENDER UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR’S”

By SAGITTARIUS

Christianity as taught by Christ was a world-renouncing religion. His followers were given no code of civil or criminal law to govern their life in the world. They were not told to build on earth a ‘*Daru’s Salam*’ or a ‘City of God’ as the Muslim were later on. Indeed, ‘The Prince of this world’ was an appellation of the devil, while Christ said specifically that His Kingdom was not of this world. That was what infuriated the Jews: that one should come claiming to be the Messiah and yet not restore the Kingdom of David or given them domination over the Gentiles.

Christ’s followers were to live inoffensively in the world, not resisting evil, rendering its dues to the foreign, pagan state that governed them — and all that was essential to God. Mary, who sat listening to the Master, was praised above Martha who attended to the practical job of providing for him. The young man who wished to go further than mere obedience to the law was told to give his property away and become a religious mendicant. There is no record of any of Christ’s immediate followers getting married after joining him; they followed him around as celibate mendicants. It was not the sort of religion that organizes man’s life in the world or attempts to sanctify the world but the sort that turns him away from the world to the quest of his own salvation. “And seek ye not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Under the circumstances then existing, this otherworldliness was an advantage to the early

Christians. Had they attempted to found a Christian State on earth they would have come up against the full might of the Roman Empire. They were persecuted as it was for being ‘atheists’, but only sporadically; nothing to what would have happened if they had been considered rebels as well. Owing to their indifference to the social and political life of the pagan world around them, they were able to infiltrate it silently, appeasing the spiritual hunger that always assails men in a materialistic world; until in the end they became too numerous and powerful to be ignored and the walls of Jericho fell: the Empire succumbed to them.

The acceptance of Christianity by the Roman Empire, the fiction that a whole people could be Christian, was enough to swamp the primitive ardour of any religion. It blurred the distinction between Christian and non-Christian, blunted the keen edge of opting for Christ. Because, of course, it was a fiction. A whole people may be taught to believe that certain historical events occurred in the past or even to accept certain doctrinal beliefs as to what will happen to them after death, but that is not what Christianity had meant to Christ’s early followers. It had meant rejecting this world for Christ’s sake and being prepared to suffer imprisonment, torture or death in order to be able to say with St. Paul: “I live, yet not I but Christ in me.”

Who now was to check that a profession of Christianity implied more than half-measures, when it no longer involved any danger or sacrifice? Indeed, ordination might now be an avenue to position or power. It is no accident that in the same century that Christianity was accepted by the world, the world began to be rejected by Christians, going out into the desert as hermits or banding together as monks,

This change faced Christianity with a new problem. Once whole countries began to be considered Christian and not merely those individuals who had chosen Christianity of their own volition in preference to 'this world', it became necessary to take responsibility for the entire organization of life — government, justice, business, education, everything. The natural thing to do was to accept and sanctify the law of the land insofar as it was not incompatible with Christ's teaching. If the spread of Christianity had been eastwards to China there is little doubt that it would have accepted Confucianism as its legal and social basis. If it had spread through a number of independent countries it might have accepted a different law in each. In the early centuries of our era, however, the lands through which Christianity spread and which were to become 'Christendom' were to an overwhelming extent provinces of the Roman Empire. Rome already had an international legal code overriding the local customary law of its various provinces, and this was naturally taken over by the Church to become, with appropriate emendations, the canon law of Christendom.

The Church thus transformed Christianity from a world-renouncing to a world-sanctifying religion. The ideal of renunciation still continued, but this now meant withdrawal from the nominally Christian world into a monastery or hermitage. The world was no longer a non-Christian state to be shunned. On the contrary, the Church strove to organize it as a Christian Commonwealth, an earthly reflection of Christ's Kingdom, educating its children in a Christian way, sponsoring and censoring its law and literature, sanctifying its regulation of marriage and inheritance, business and property.

It would not be fair to condemn the Church for this or to represent it as a betrayal of Christ's teaching, because once whole peoples were declared Christian by their governments there was really no alternative. It is enough to consider the only two theoretical alternatives to see that neither of them was in fact possible.

One would have been a legalised anarchy : say to every thief and adulteress, "Go and sin no more", and have no enforcement of law and no government. If men of goodwill, the spiritual leaders of the community had thus refused to accept responsibility for law and order either men of ill-will would have seized it or others would have brought chaos in its place. The other apparent alternative would have been to abstain from all interference with law and government, leaving it to the secular power and making a complete cleavage between religion and secular life. But a religious community could not do that. Once organised Christianity had accepted responsibility for men's conscience and conduct it could not restrict that to private life and exclude the whole domain of law and government, literature and education, and the organization of society.

At the end of the Middle Ages, however, the Renaissance-Reformation movement was a revolt against the Church's religious organization of Christendom. It took some centuries to run its course, breaking down bit by bit the opposition that a change of course in history always encounters ; but by now it has been completed. Christianity as a complete way of life has been rejected by the world and has once more become an option for individuals. Scarcely a trace remains of the Christian organization of what was once 'Christendom'. Children are no longer educated to a Christian life and faith. Philosophy is secular and mainly irreligious. A science of secular morals and ethics has been evolved. When a man gets entangled in his character he consults a psychologist not a priest. Neither government nor finance charts its course by Christian regulations. Marriage and divorce have become civil contracts. It is not the Church that has withdrawn from the world but the world that has withdrawn from the Church.

In fact, the situation has come round full circle to what it was in the early days, when Christians were a dedicated few living in an alien un-Christian world. Whether they live

a country where Christianity is frowned upon and persecuted, as was the early Church, or where it is merely ignored, in either case they are outsiders to the world, in it but not of it. But that does not mean that they have to denounce it openly or to rebel against it. There is no need for movements or crusades. So long as they dissociate themselves from its un-Christian actions and policies that is all Christ demanded of them. They can conform outwardly, obey the laws, render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, while inwardly rejecting the whole unspiritual set-up and rendering all that is essential to God.

One characteristic of the Early Church was

the small number of Christians; another was the tremendous spiritual power that informed them and radiated out from them. Now again those one can call Christians are world-re-nouncers, world-rejecters, and in some at least there is a strong and luminous sincerity. Now again it has become unnecessary to reject the world physically by going into a monastery because the mere fact of opting for Christ is itself a rejection. Is it too much to hope that to-day again Christians will make themselves felt by sheer spiritual radiance in the inert, lethargic world of materialism which they renounce inwardly while conforming outwardly to its ways?

HEARTBREAK

By EBBANA GRACE BLANCHARD

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."

Almost unnoticed, one by one,
Our early candle-hopes
Shatter in Life's cold breath.
We do not care a shrug;
There are plenty left.

There are NOT!

We draw remainders cosy close.
Our circle shrinks.

As lights depart, fears stealthily increase:
Cupping cold hands around the last bright
flame
We cherish it against invading dark.

A guest—its gone—
We are alone,
And black.

We fall, defeated,
Eyes "put out" by shock:

'Tis only then,
Lying as dead across the feet of Life,
The glimmering square of window can be
seen:
Stars beyond stars lead outward, infinite.

We are not caged by bars of candle-bones;
The Way is not begun, but we are FREE
To rise and follow where the stars stretch out
Beyond the bound of sense, of hope or
thought;
Where only Love can reach
With straining finger-tips and sobbing
breath—
When lo! a Strong Right Hand
Encompasses our wrist with pierced grasp
Drawing us upward to the Heart of Love.

ACCESS TO INFINITY

By JOEL S. GOLDSMITH*

Let us take the unfoldment of the Source, divine Consciousness, infinite Consciousness as being the consciousness of the men and women of the past, present, and future—going back 6,000 years and looking ahead 6,000 years to all the men and women who will appear on the surface of the earth. Then remember that the infinite Consciousness of all the spiritual lights, inventors, composers, and writers, is that same Consciousness which has appeared on earth, will appear on earth, and which is available to us on earth here and now. Remember that we, through our individual consciousness, have access to the infinite Consciousness and that this includes not only spiritual wisdom, but all the wisdom of the ages—commercial, economic, artistic.

If you go back to the wisdom of Egypt 2,000 years B.C. and read of the discoveries in mathematics and science, and the principles of navigation, you will have to ask yourself, "Whence came this?" You will then learn that these men, living in bare rooms or monastic cell, with a very limited amount of writing material, brought forth through their hours and weeks and months and years of inner searching principles from which were derived the laws for the road building, the palaces, temples and pyramids which now exist in Egypt, India, China, Cambodia and South America. Whence came this wisdom? *Out of the consciousness of men who had access to the infinite Consciousness.* This means nothing unless it leads you to books or to other experiences that will send your mind all over the world searching out the great discoveries in science, invention, art, or music, and cause you

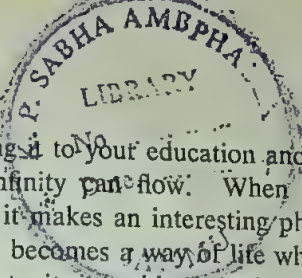
to pause and ponder: "Whence come Whence come?"

The consciousness of individual man is absolutely infinite, and you can sit down individually, enter your consciousness, and bring forth infinity. Then you can look around you and see what you have not acquired, or what you acquired and then lost, and laugh as if they were but grains of dust in comparison to the infinity to which you have access. It is not necessary that you go anywhere, or meet "miracle people", or have your fortune told. All you need do is turn within. Those who do this are going to make startling discoveries and so I caution you: Do not discuss it with anyone. There is no easier way to lose it because no one will believe you except those who have been there before you.

Due to the almost world-wide spread of The Infinite Way during this short time, we are receiving requests for the story of my life. Why? Because people think they will discover "the secret" in it. Yes, I could tell them where and where I was born and where I went to school, but they would then say: "That does not account for the miracle of The Infinite Way." Of course not! Imagine what would happen if I tried to tell it. Why? Because, as many have recognized, The Infinite Way is constituted of the wisdom of the East and the West and the Near East. It is all there. Where did I get it, since I had no access to books or schools through which I could discover it? I received it from the original Source of the wisdom of the East and the West and the Near East.

Behind every individual who has received a spiritual Truth, or an invention, or music, or art, there is one infinite Consciousness which is its Source. And when you

*For a note on this series of articles by Joel Goldsmith see our issue of October 1964. Note that the next article in the series will appear not in April but July — EDITOR.



That, you tap all of the branches that have gone out from the Source. My conscious oneness with God constitutes my oneness with all spiritual being and idea, and this cannot be limited to time, space, or place. Do you not see that all of this can take place only through introspection, cogitation, contemplation, meditation—anything that takes the attention away from the outside world and draws it back to that centre within your Self—to let “the imprisoned splendour” escape?

An activity of Grace leads you to this kingdom, this realm of Consciousness within you, and then an activity of Grace starts the flow. Enter the sanctuary, close the door of the five physical senses, and listen to Me :

Seek Me. Infinite divine Being, and “I will make you fishers of men.”¹ Jesus will not do it, nor will Joel do it, but I will—this I that is the I of your inner Being. I will make you fishers of men. I will lead you in a Way. I will go before you. I will prepare mansions for you. “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”²

Do you not see that you are led back to the realm of the I, and that this I is the manna—the bread, the meat, the wine and the water that flows by the same divine Grace which populates the earth with men, animals, vegetables and minerals, and which creates each and every thing unto a purpose?

The way in which this works is a mystery to us and, because it sometimes appears in such natural ways, we do not realize that it was actually prompted by a divine Grace.

Do you not see that we of ourselves cannot know these things, unless into our consciousness pour these ideas which became inventions? Individuals had to go within themselves to find these secrets. They were not in books; they had to be discovered within. The real *consciousness* of man is infinite and, the moment

you stop limiting it to your education and your environment, infinity can flow. When all of this is revealed it makes an interesting philosophy, but it only becomes a way of life when an individual adopts it into his experience and determines to have specific periods day and night until meditation is an automatic process that continues even while asleep. Great revelations are given during sleep when the human mind is still.

If you keep this principle secret and sacred among those who hear it or read it, and if you practise it conscientiously, such miracles will take place in your life as you yourself could not believe possible. The reason is this : if you think of it in terms of God's Grace you will see how infinite it can be. You will see that it is not limited to you ; it is limited only to God's Grace and your receptivity. Then by your example, by your light, the world would seek that Light. And it would find It, because this is a universal Truth. Therefore, the demonstration of infinity in your experience is measured by the extent to which you practice a principle of this nature—never revealing it, never speaking of it, and never trying to teach it until you are so consciously one with it that It is already flowing.

One could become very popular teaching this principle to individuals, and allowing them to believe through ignorance that it was for their benefit and that it would do great things for them. But that would be misleading, because God's Grace cannot be limited to an individual. This passage is therefore given to us : “The vine consumeth not its own grapes.” In other words we are the vine through which this message comes. It blesses us, but its major blessing is that others are led to us, and then it becomes a universal Truth which blesses the entire universe.

Eventually this causes a disruption in your life, when as a businessman you find less time for your business, or when as a housewife you find less time for your home, and more and more you discover that you are being drawn

¹ Matthew 4 : 19.

² Hebrews 13 : 5.

into a universal scheme of things. The Master says, and I am not speaking of a man but of the Spirit of God within you: "Come and follow Me and I will make you fishers of men," and It pulls you out of your little fishing job into an activity that enables this Grace you have discovered to bless the world. "I will make you fishers of men."

In the moment you prove that the infinite Consciousness of this universe is *your* individual consciousness, and that you have access to the Consciousness which is, which ever has been and ever shall be—you are called out as a fisher of men to be a light unto the world. Light does not go out looking for places in which to shine. As the sun stays fast in the heavens, a light shines and lets the rest of the world come to It. And so as we in some measure become the Light, we hold what we have received sacredly and secretly until the world starts to come to our doorway for It. We may travel the world, not on a "save the

world" basis, but only because the world has invited us.

The secret of the spiritual life is to know that you have access to Infinity through your own consciousness, to go within sufficiently often to let the flow appear, to let the imprisoned splendour escape—and then to be careful not to personalize It and think you have become "good" or that you have become "spiritual". Remember you have become an instrument or transparency for an infinite, universal Grace. You choke it and shut it off immediately if you personalize It, but you can increase the flow by realizing It as an infinite Grace flowing universally. Like the tree that is showing forth God's Grace, this does not glorify *us*. It lets us stand still and show forth God's glory. Anything else is catering to the ego, and the ego must die as completely as the tree that cannot say "I" and think it is something of itself. And so it is that this reconciliation us to God, and thereby fulfills us.

SUICIDE NO CURE

*From a record left by Alan Chadwick **

I once asked Bhagavan about suicide. I had been cycling round Arunachala and on meeting a bus the thought occurred to me: "Why shouldn't I concentrate on the Self and, so doing, throw myself in front of the bus so as to attain Moksha?" I told Bhagavan when I got back but he said it would not work. Even though I tried to concentrate on the Self, thoughts would spring up involuntarily as I fell; the mind would become very active and owing to the thoughts life would continue and I should take another body.

* For whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of January 1964.

VARIETIES OF BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

By FRANCIS ALLEN

The writer of these words is not a Buddhist. He does not call himself Buddhist or Christian or Hindu, nor is he the devotee of any one Guru. He does not label himself.

He does not label himself because it is unBuddhist to set a label to any *Nāma-Rūpa*. Any 'Name-Form' with such a label attached to it would be egoistic. And Buddhism teaches that egoism is mankind's most hideous disease.

If one calls oneself "a Buddhist" one lets oneself in for all the erroneous, not to say fantastic, ideas which other people may associate with "Buddhism". Moreover, it is possible to become attached even to a label. And Buddhism teaches that attachment constitutes a major symptom of egoism.

Misrepresentation and attachment are two dangers of which Occidental Buddhists have to beware. In Buddhist countries of Asia, where the majority of people are nominal or traditional Buddhists, such problems do not occur. In the West the acceptance of Buddha Dharma calls for a personal reappraisal of one's motives.

However, some so-called Western Buddhists are individuals with only a temporary intellectual addiction for Buddhist literature, people with a bias against Christian monopoly, people disillusioned with Western standards. The bloody Karma of the Christian Church is Buddhism's most potent missionary.

Nevertheless, a thoughtful examination of Western life is altogether more helpful than the sheep-like acceptance of materialistic conformity, of blind belief that the personal possession of advertised assets (a faster car, a bigger house, a newer television set) is the aim and end-all of life.

Thus Buddhism in the West has come to serve the important purpose of enabling a tiny

minority of Europeans and Americans to become aware of themselves and aware of the false values of modern advertised utopias. The few who survive the shock of orientating themselves away from the emptiness of utilitarian life make "good" Buddhists.

Of course this does not mean that Western Buddhists cannot enjoy modern comforts. It does mean that they are not overcome with exasperation when a car of their own is not available, or hopelessly miserable should the TV set cease to function. For the great majority of Westerners are fast adding a fear of silence to that of being alone.

These pitiful frames of mind, fostered by conditions among increasing populations in modern welfare States (the so-called "affluent societies"), can be alleviated by the practise of daily meditation, ranging from simple breath control to sustained contemplation. Such exercises appeal to a limited number of European lay Buddhists, although the original motive in some cases was the faulty one of wishing to cultivate super-normal powers.

The Buddhists of the Western world fall into four main categories : (1) followers of (Japanese) Zen ; (2) adherents of (Sinhalese-Burman-Thai) Theravada ; (3) devotees of (Tibetan) ritualistic Buddhism ; (4) advocates of a Neo-Buddhism adapted to modern Western style.

The majority find Zen the most helpful. This is because it contains the original Indian Mahayana tempered by lengthy sojourns in China and then in Japan : it retains a potency better suited to the climates of America and Europe than any other School of Buddhism. Much of its appeal derives from its mystical aspect, retained from the pristine Teaching.

Quite otherwise is Theravada, which makes its appeal to one's powers of reasoning. Theravada serves as an excellent foundation upon which to build an understanding of Buddhist philosophy. But such understanding is not at all the same as wisdom. And Theravada lacks, because it has lost, the mystical interpretation of the Teaching.

Tibetan Buddhism appeals largely to those preoccupied with occultism. As for those originals, the 'Neo-Buddhists': each is his own guru, attempting to proselytize in ways that are remarkably unBuddhist; but some of them are well organized and untroubled by tradition, and any mass acceptance of Buddhism in Europe would be likely to be Neo-Buddhist.

People who have known, or know Sri Ramana Maharshi, will agree that Realization of Truth, which is Nirvana, can never be attained by the reasoning mind alone. For as soon as one stops to rationalize, it escapes one's grasp. It IS—until one begins to think about it. Lord Buddha imparted to His Arhat companions the knack of sustained Liberation; but the modern would-be follower of the Buddha has a herculean task finding his way through the jungle trees of Buddhist literature before he sees the light.

One can lose oneself for years in such a forest. Fortunate indeed is he who meets with the Guru who teaches him the priceless enquiry, "Who am I?".

SERVICE

Translated by PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN

*From the SANNIDHI MURAI (Tamil) of Muruganar **

Your Grace it was I stumbled to your feet,
 Your love that raised me up and made me yours,
 Chosen to serve, though not for service meet,
 Untutored save by Grace that from you pours.
 I too have seen all creatures live and move
 Not of themselves but Self, all living prove
 That I am nothing and can nothing do;
 So all my duties I have cast on you.

* For an introduction to whom see our issue of October 1964, p. 244.

THE FOCAL POINT

By WEI WU WEI

We mistake the functional centre of the phenomenal aspect of our noumenality for a "self". It has no more autonomy than a heart, a physical organ, no more volitional potentialities, and no more self-consciousness; yet we attribute to it the sentience which represents what noumenally we are.

A psyche-soma, phenomenal as it is, must have a functional centre, without which it could not be what is seen as a "sentient being". Such centre must be psychic, just as the heart is somatic. The five senses, interpreted by the sixth, depend on this centre for their manifestation as perception and cognition; all functioning, instinctive or rational, is directed therefrom, and it is logical, therefore, that this centre should be considered as the subjective element of the objectivised phenomenon. So, phenomenally, it appears, but itself this "subject" is an object, so that never could it be what we are, but only a part of the phenomenal set-up of the discriminated and separate phenomenon which we think that we are. Never could it be autonomous, never could it exercise volition, never could it be what we conceive as "us".

Moreover our sentience is essentially noumenal, and we are mistaking the switch-board for the power-station, the reservoir for the source, an electronic computer for a mind: *the functional centre of a sentient being is purely cybernetic.*

The identification which gives rise to a supposed "entity" that then and thereby thinks that it is in bondage, is identification of what noumenally we are, of our natural noumenality, with the functional "organ" in the psyche-soma which becomes thereby a supposed "self" or "ego" with relative, if not

full, autonomy and volition. We do not even care to remember that only a small fraction of our physical movements, of our organic functioning responds in any way to the initiatives of our personalised wishes.

How does this situation arise? It arises as a result of the splitting of mind, called "dualism," whereby the phenomenal aspect of noumenality—that is pure impersonal phenomenality—divides into negative and positive, and there appear "objects" which require a "subject," and "others" require a "self", each totally dependent on its counterpart for its apparent existence.

But mind, though apparently split in the process of phenomenalisation, remains whole as noumenon, and only in the becoming apparent, or in order to become apparent, is it obliged to divide into an apparent see-er and an apparent seen, a cogniser and a thing cognised, which nevertheless can never be different, never two, for though in appearing it divides yet in its substratum it remains whole.

All phenomenality, therefore, is objective, that is appearance in mind, and its appearance is dependent on its division into a see-er or cogniser and what is seen or cognised, that is which becomes apparent to an observer whose existence is only apparent in order that appearance may appear. It follows that in all this phenomenality there is no "ens" anywhere, for neither the apparent cogniser nor the apparently cognised is an entity in its own right, i.e. having a nature of its own, autonomy or volition.

It follows also that the substratum of "sentience" whereby all this manifestation is cognised, called *prajnā* in Sanskrit, is an immediate expression of noumenality. Utterly impersonal, as devoid of "ens" as are phe-

nomena, "it" is nevertheless, and "it" must necessarily be, what we are, and *all that we are*. In conceptualising "it" as *prajnā*, "it" is conceptualising "itself", via the familiar dualistic process of splitting into conceptualiser and concept or cogniser and cognised, so that in seeking for what we are—that for which we are seeking is the seeker : the seeker is the sought and the sought is the seeker, and that—as Padma Sambhava told us in plain words — *is* what we are.

There is no entity involved anywhere, space-time is only a conceptual framework which accompanies events in order that events may have the necessary extension where they may appear to occur.

Objectively there is total negation, for Negative Way alone abolishes the factuality of all phenomena and the existence of entity such, but if a positive representation is attempted these are the elements out of which the image seems to be composed.

THAT WHICH IS

By G. L. N.

Atma cannot be perceived by the mind or expressed in words. The intellect, which is an instrument of Atma, can never be it. That would be like saying, as Bhagavan put it, that the cinema screen is in the picture. Sri Bhagavan, an embodiment of that very Atma, has made understanding easy.

The title 'Forty Verses on Reality' chosen by Sri Bhagavan is itself instructive. The terms Being, Consciousness, Bliss connote aspects of That Which Is. After peeling off super-imposed layers, what remains is Brahman, and that is Reality.

Is there also non-existence? Bhagavan said no. "It is not a void." (*Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 12). No one denies his own existence. Every one says 'I am.' Since we see the world also, we must conceive of unitary being with the power of becoming many.

Sleep also cannot be a void. It is a state where the world is absent but the experimenter of it is present. If he were not, he could not recollect having slept. Reality cannot become void, nor can void become reality or create existence.

Existence alone exists. Pure existence is the essence of every existent being and is eternal, since there is no non-existence. It never ceases to exist. The same being continues in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

What is existence? There is no other knowledge to know it, because in order to know the knower must first exist. "Can there be knowledge other than existence being?" (*Forty Verses*, 1st invocation verse). Therefore existent being or Reality alone is knowledge. (See also *Upadesa Saram* or *Thirty Verses*, v. 23).

That which exists as Knowledge is One without a second, for if there were two more Infinities each would exclude the other. Knowledge is the one subject on which the concept of others depends. So basic existence is only One and that One is Knowledge or Consciousness and there is no other.

What is this being which is Consciousness? What can it be but the one who asks? The questioner says 'I' or 'my self.' What is this 'I' or 'Self'? Are there a number of selves or is there only one?

By 'I' every one means his self. Every one refers to himself as a single entity, and the experience of every one is of himself alone. Before the word 'I' is uttered there is silence. The sound 'I' emanates from this silent source. Every individual is in that pristine state of silence until he enunciates the word 'I'. This Silence is One. All are One in Silence. The uttered individual selves of all are one Self, so pure Consciousness is Self, the Self of all.

A WORLD-SANCTIFYING RELIGION

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

In 'Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism' Arthur Osborne points out a very important alternative in the attitude of religion to the world: it can either regard the world as hostile and renounce it, or it can regard it as a book of symbols flung abroad by God, manifesting His power and beauty, and seek to harmonize and sanctify it. The former is the attitude of Buddhism and Christianity as enunciated by their founders; the latter is that of Judaeism and Islam.

Christ told the rich young man to give his property away to the poor and become a wandering mendicant. His followers were to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's", to pay taxes to an alien, irreligious government and obey its laws. He disappointed the Jews by refusing to lead a revolt against this alien government. His kingdom, he declared, was not of this world. As in every world-renouncing religion, celibacy was prized above marriage. St. Paul sanctioned marriage only as a concession to human weakness. It was much the same in Buddhism. Buddha did not endorse the caste system, but neither did he denounce it. Whole-hearted seekers would in any case renounce the world, of which caste was a part, to become monks and celibates, so what did it matter?

The Qur'an, on the other hand, is full of references to the earth and the marvels of it, to mountains and seas, the sun and rain, day and night, beasts and birds, as God's creation and as signs for those who can understand. Nothing of His mercies is to be rejected. Neither monasticism nor celibacy is acceptable. The whole of God's creation is to be accepted, understood, enjoyed, but with purity, without egoism; and thus it will also be sanctified.

Therefore Islam had, from the start, far more need for social, legal and political organization than Christianity or Buddhism. If the

world is to be renounced in any case, why trouble to organize it? Let Caesar do that and pay him his dues, but leave the men of God free to follow their path of renunciation and seek the kingdom which is not of this world. Such could not be the attitude of Islam. Since the world was to be accepted and sanctified, all its relationships must be regulated; and this necessitated a network of civil and criminal law governing domestic, economic, professional and other departments of life.

The word 'Muslim' can be used in two senses. In one sense it can signify any one in any religion who submits to God, as, for instance, Abraham, who lived long before Mohammad, is referred to in the Qur'an as a Muslim. In this sense it would correspond in Hindu terminology to 'bhakta', one who follows the path of devotion and submission. Normally, however, it is used in the more technical sense of one who accepts and follows the specific religion established by Mohammad with all its religious, moral, social and legal obligations. In this sense it is a complete fusion of bhakti marga and karma marga.

This explains why the early Islamic Empire was so largely due to conquest, why in fact the Prophet and his immediate successors felt the need to challenge and conquer their neighbours. It was not simply a question of intolerance—no one could outdo the early Christians in intolerance once they had the power to persecute—the persecution of the Monophysites and other heretics among them, Charlemagne's slaughter of the pagan Saxons, etc. But Christians, having at first no framework of karma marga to their religion, could quietly infiltrate a pagan world, paying their dues to Caesar and regarding their religion as something private between themselves and God. Muslims could not. In order to live an Islamic life as prescribed for them in their Holy

Book, it was necessary to belong to an Islamic community governed by Islamic law ; and for this they had to be the rulers. They might tolerate non-Muslims within the community (and they did more often than the Christians, though a good deal less than their modern apologists are apt to imply) but the community had to be shaped by Islamic law and tradition administered by Muslim rulers and jurists.

This is important to-day because it accounts for the dilemma with which Muslims are faced in the modern world. It explains why almost every modern book on Islam devotes so much space to the question of adaptation to modernism, while books on Buddhism and Christianity pass lightly over the subject or find it unnecessary to raise it. The modern world is no more alien or hostile to religion than was the Roman government of Palestine in the time of Christ. Christians, renouncing the unsuccessful Mediaeval attempt to create a Christian social order and make Christianity a world-sanctifying religion, can therefore revert to the attitude of Christ's day, rendering unto Caesar the outer organization of life and making their religion a private and personal matter. So can Buddhists. But not Muslims.

A Muslim who honestly believes that the modern organization of social and economic life is superior to the Islamic and that an Islamic state could and should adopt some Western code of law in place of the shari'at has in effect ceased to be a Muslim, just as a Communist who really prefers the capitalist organization of society has ceased to be a Communist. A Muslim marooned in a modern community, like a Communist in a capitalist society, may have to put up with a social order that he disapproves of, but only reluctantly and with the intention of overthrowing it if it ever becomes possible. Until and unless he does so he cannot lead a fully Islamic life.

If that is the position of the individual Muslim, what of the Islamic state buffeted by the

economic and cultural winds of modernism? an economic system based on the payment of interest, a non-religious educational system, a democratic political system, basing law on the will of the people, not the word of God, a social system based on equality of the sexes? I do not claim to be able to provide a quick or easy answer to a question that is agitating all Islamic governments and writers to-day, but I do insist that it is not a question of detail, of how many concessions have to be made and what sort, but of principle : whether the Islamic order of life is still held by Muslims to be the best attainable, indeed whether it is still at all viable. If not then the position should be boldly faced and it should be admitted openly that that particular amalgam of bhakti marga and karma marga which was instituted by the Prophet Mohammad has served its purpose and no longer meets the needs of mankind. The answer cannot be a compromise because Islam is based on the Qur'an as firmly as Christianity is on the Bible and the Qur'an expressly denounces those who accept some parts of it and reject others. For those who accept it, it pronounces all questions of law and social behaviour as well as of faith and worship. It lays down, for instance, the procedure for divorce. It specifies at what age a child shall be weaned. It prescribes cutting off the hand as the punishment for theft. It forbids taking interest on loans. And it insists that it is to be accepted as a whole.

It is still possible to be a Muslim in the vaguer sense of pure bhakti marga, of one who submits to the Divine Will ; it is still possible to follow a spiritual path, however unconducional outer conditions may be ; but is it still possible either for an individual or a state to follow the Islamic way of life, sincerely believing it to be the best possible and championing it as such? This is the question with which Muslims are to-day faced. It cannot be answered with a 'yes' or a 'no', but it should not be evaded.

ONLY ONE SELF

By NAGAMMA¹

11th. Sept., 1947.

Yesterday a Swami came and sat in the hall. He seemed anxious to speak to Bhagavan but hesitant. After some time he approached him and said : "Swami, it is said that Atma is all-pervading. Does that mean that it is in a dead body also ?"

"Oho ! So that is what you want to know ?" Bhagavan rejoined. "And did the question occur to the dead body or to you ?"

"To me," he said.

"When you are asleep do you question whether you exist or not ?" Bhagavan continued. "It is only after you wake up that you say you exist. In the dream-state also Atma exists. Really there is no such thing as a dead or living body. What does not move we call dead, and what has movement we call living. In dreams you see any number of bodies, living and dead, but they have no existence when you wake up. In the same way this whole world, animate and inanimate, is non-existent. Death means the dissolution of the ego and rebirth, the birth of the ego. There are births and deaths, but they are of the ego, not of you. You exist whether the sense of ego is there or not. You are its source but are not that sense. Mukti (Liberation) means finding the origin of these births and deaths and destroying the very roots of the ego-sense. That is Mukti. It means dying with full awareness. If one dies thus one is

born again immediately at the same place with full knowledge of the Self, known as 'Aham Aham' (I-I). One who is born thus has no more doubts.

A young European who came here four or five days back asked Bhagavan a number of questions after the chanting of the Vedas yesterday evening. He had already packed to leave. Bhagavan, as usual, countered with the questions : "Who are you ? Who is asking questions ?"

Finally the young man asked Bhagavan which verse of the Gita he liked most, and Bhagavan replied that he liked them all. When he still persisted in asking which was the most important, Bhagavan told him Book X, verse 20, which runs : "I am the Self, Oh Guda-kesa, seated in the heart of all beings ; I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all beings."

The questioner was pleased and, on taking leave said : "Swami, this unreal self is obliged to travel owing to the exigencies of work. I pray that you may be pleased to recommend that this unreal self may be merged in the real Self."

Smiling, Bhagavan replied : "Such a recommendation might be necessary only if there were a number of different selves—one to ask for a recommendation, one to recommend and one to hear the recommendation. But there are not so many selves. There is only one Self. Everything is in the one Self, so who am I to address and who would listen ?"

¹ For a note on Nagamma and her letters see our issue of January 1964.

That which is self is other : that which is other is self,
And this which I am is neither self nor other.

— WEI WU WEI.



REVIEWS

KRISHNAVATARA. Vol. I, The Magic Flute, pp. 242, price Rs. 10, and Vol. II, The Wrath of an Emperor, pp. 435, price Rs. 15. (Both volumes published by Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7.)

Indologists have disputed the date and even the existence of Krishna, and particularly the identity of the Krishna of the *itihasas* with the enunciator of the doctrine of the *Bhagavad Gita*. K. M. Munshi has taken up the stupendous task of vindicating that identity in a fictional biography closely based on the records, of which the first two volumes have already appeared. In general he gives a naturalistic interpretation to the miraculous exploits, showing how they could well have won a supernatural repute even in Krishna's lifetime. He does, however, credit Krishna with the very rarely used power of spiritual healing. The escapades with the Gopis are assigned to boyhood, an actual love affair being envisaged only with Radha just before Krishna leaves his idyllic home at Brindavan to meet his destiny at the royal court of Mathura by challenging the tyrant Kamsa.

Rare literary ability is required to depict a saintly hero without making him either goody-goody or inhuman. K. M. Munshi has already evinced this ability in 'Bhagawan Parashuram', his previous fic-

tional biography of the Sixth Avatara; he now shows no less skill in reconstructing the life of the Eighth. Gracious and widely loved, although with many bitter and jealous enemies, Krishna is shown above all as the inflexible champion of dharma, prepared at any moment to stake his life on its defence against the destruction of *adharma*. Nevertheless, this is still not the Krishna who could say: "I am the origin of the whole universe and that into which all dissolves,"¹ or "Even those who worship other gods and have faith really worship Me, though they do not know it."²

The world of the ancient Aryans is well depicted. It is not romanticised. We are shown a rough, violent world with plenty of ambition and jealousy in it, plenty of *adharma*; but through it all runs the belief in dharma and the desire to see it vindicated. One can feel that Dr. Munshi writes from his heart, and indeed no one has done more than him in this modern age of *adharma* to champion the pure values of Hindu dharma.

SERMONS IN STORMS.: By Krishnanand. (pp. 180, obtainable free on request from the author, Shanti Ashram, Bhadran, via Anand, Gujarat.)

There can be few words on a title-page which discourage readers as 'sermons'. Swami Krishnanand has unnecessarily handicapped his book in this way, since it is not sermons at all but a collection of varied and colourful episodes met with during his wanderings about India. Depicting noble and corrupt, compassionate and brutal, they are enlivened by shrewd observation and a vivid sense of humour. With remarkable impersonality

CORRECTION

In our October issue the name of R. F. Rose was put by mistake after the review of 'Last Days of the Buddha' whereas it should have been put after 'Mysticism in World Religion' since that also was by him.

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, VII. 6.

² *Ibid.*, IX, 23.

Swami can tell a tale against himself—for instance how, as a young sadhu, he went to spend the night reciting his mantra in a cave, but on finding that it contained a python was so terrified that he could neither concentrate on his mantra nor rise and flee. Or again when he was offered a sweet by a leper and (as most of us would do) declined it until the leper quoted to him a Sanskrit text meaning: "You have not yet overcome the fear of infection; how then can you make any progress on the path?"

The book contains fascinating sidelights on Indian life and religion and makes lively reading.

MIRACLES DO STILL HAPPEN : By Dilip Kumar Roy. (Hari Krishna Mandir, Poona-5, and Popular Book Depot, Bombay-7, pp. 404. Price Rs. 9.50.)

In fictional guise Dilip Kumar Roy represents himself and his foremost disciple Indira Devi in America vindicating the miraculous to an American girl who, though not actually sceptical, is doubtful. His style is emotional, sensitive, discursive, allowing of unlimited discussion. He describes the power of Divine Grace breaking through the hard shell of rationalism and sometimes breaching the physical moulds in a way that can only be called miraculous. Despite the mask of fiction he guarantees that none of the episodes he thus narrates are fictional; all are based on what he or reliable friends of his have witnessed or experienced. However it is not supernatural events in themselves that interest him; he definitely distinguishes between the spiritual and the occult, rejecting the latter. His real theme is the outpouring of Divine Grace with or without physical manifestations. He shows how much more potent this is than any argument in washing away scepticism.

EXPERIENCES OF A PILGRIM SOUL : By Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati. (Yoga Samaj, pp. 474, Rs. 5.50.)

Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati's autobiography is largely concerned with the saints and yogis he has met. He seems to have been very fortunate in this respect, beginning with the saintly uncle who confirmed his inclination to renunciation when he was still a schoolboy. He seems also to have been uncommonly impressionable. When he was a young man some missionary friends and employers almost persuaded him to choose Christianity. Then, meeting with Sufis, he followed an Islamic path for some time. After this the influence of Tilak, Gandhi and others made a nationalist of him. Then he came to Tiruvannamalai and felt the power and bliss that flowed from the Maharshi. That did not prevent him, however, from going on to Pondicherry where he fell under the spell of Sri Aurobindo and the

Mother. Here he settled down and stayed for 25 years, maintaining silence but writing many books.

He left and became vocal in 1950, shortly before the death of Sri Aurobindo. Now began a triumphal phase when he felt that he had achieved what he had been seeking. He visited various ashrams and was received with honour, especially at that of Swami Sivananda at Rishikesh. Then he made himself an apostle of Meher Baba and was accepted as such. He made triumphal tours throughout India and in other countries of the world, addressing many public meetings. Returning to India, he founded the Yoga Samaj in Madras and became the editor of 'The Call Divine'.

ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA. A Biographical Sketch : By Bhikshu Sangharakshita. (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy. Pp. 98, Price not stated.)

The life of Anagarika Dharmapala, now appearing in its fourth edition, is a study of a missionary by a missionary. Its hero certainly lived a strenuous and dedicated life, but one wonders whether the author has ever asked himself how much of the appreciation shown for him would be merited also by the Christian missionaries he so detests, or how many of the strictures he passes on them might apply also to his hero. On one thing at least both categories of missionary agree: that is in deprecating Hinduism and indeed all creeds but their own.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

THE GULISTAN OR ROSE-GARDEN OF SA'DI : Translated by Edward Rehatsek, Edited with a Preface by W. G. Archer, Introduction by G. M. Wickens. (Allen and Unwin, Pp. 265, Price 42 s.)

Sa'di's Gulistan is one of those rare books which, like Chaucer's Prologue, hold up a mirror to the times. Its brief stories and anecdotes bring vividly before us the urbane world of 13th Century Persia, with its culture and vices and the unpredictability of kingly rule. They remain delightful in this translation, although the fragments of verse that must have given them point and sparkle in the original are here barely distinguishable from prose.

Sa'di is a humanist. His voice throughout is for upright but prudent living. However it is revealing to see that certain vices are so prevalent in his world as scarcely to be considered such by him. For instance, though alcohol is forbidden in the Qur'an, he describes drunkenness as a normal event, without censure. And, as in Ancient Greece, homosexual love affairs seem to be taken for granted and considered too normal to need an apology.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

Ananda Mayi Ma

MOTHER AS REVEALED TO ME. translated from the Bengali *Matri Darshan* of Bhaiji, Pp. 230, Price Rs. 4.)

MATRI VANI, A Selection from the Sayings of Sri Ananda Mayi Ma, recorded by Gurupriya Debi, Pp. 167, Price Rs. 1.50.

WORDS OF SRI ANANDA MAYI MA. Translated and compiled by Atmananda. Pp. 242, Price Rs. 5.)

The late Jyotish Chandra Ray, familiarly known as 'Bhaiji' was one of the earliest devotees of the woman saint Ananda Mayi Ma who is now famous throughout India and has many followers in the West also. He 'discovered' or recognized her as a young woman living in Dacca and proclaimed her Ananda Mayi Ma, 'The Joy-Permeated Mother', an incarnation of the Divine Shakti. As he himself says in his fascinating introductory chapter, it is not a biography that he has written but only some account of his direct experience of the Mother's unique being and marvellous powers. Even so it contains an interesting narration of her early years—married at the age of about twelve to a noble Brahmin youth who later became a sannyasin and her disciple. It describes various strange phenomena and powers that manifested in her life from an early age, her rather unusual states of samadhi and the symbolical playful roles she enacted.

There are stories also of miracles occurring around her: among them his own vision of "a dazzling flood of heavenly light shining forth from her face" on several occasions. She also appeared to him in her subtle body when he was living at a distance. There are cases of people receiving initiation from her in the dream-state; many cases also of people receiving relief from sickness or in their professional life or other ways.

All who have been fortunate enough to see Ma Ananda Mayi would whole-heartedly echo the account of her "genial and sweet appearance, her uncommon patience and endurance, her spirit of sacrifice and

simplicity, her ever joyful, humorous ways of dealing with men, women and children, her love for all, irrespective of caste, creed, community and nationality, her absolute freedom from pleasure, pain, the like; . . . no conflict in her, no urge to action or inaction disturbs the serenity of her will. . . . is completely steeped in the light of the Supreme.

The author also mentions the Mother's insistence on purity of heart and mind and her teaching concentration and one-pointed aspiration to find One Universal Being. He quotes her saying: "and religion are one. . . In all human activities there be a live contact with the Divine and you

not have to leave off anything. Your work will then be done well and you will be on the right track to find the Master.

Unfortunately the author died many years back and his book has not been brought out to date. That is a task some other devotee of the Mother should undertake.

Ma does not give discourses nor does she belong to any category of learned scholars or philosophers; in fact she was almost uneducated. However, the other two books under review give an account of her teachings culled from her occasional utterances and answers to questions. *Matri Vani* is a selection from her sayings made by that old and respected

devotee Sri Gurupriya Debi. *Words of Sri Ananda Mayi Ma* is a selection from the diaries meticulously maintained by Brahmachari Kamal Bhattacharya, another dedicated disciple. Both have been translated from the Bengali by Atmananda, an Australian lady devotee.

The following are characteristic examples of her teaching:—

By doing service heart and mind are purified. Doing work for its own sake is karma bhoga. As long as a desire to distinguish oneself is there it is karma bhoga.

Depend on Him absolutely. In whatever circumstances you may find yourself sustain the remembrance of Him only.

Company of saints, sages and seekers of truth is incumbent on man. Association of the kind will help to awaken his interest in the



It is necessary to try to dedicate to the Supreme every single action of one's daily life.

Silent incantation should be engaged in at all times. One should not waste breath uselessly.

Either melt the sense of separation by devotion or burn it by knowledge (jnana). For what is it that melts or burns? Only that which by its nature can be melted or burnt: namely the idea that something other than your Self exists. What will happen then? You come to know your Self.

By virtue of the Guru's power everything becomes possible.

There are two types of pilgrims on life's journey: one like a tourist, keen on sight-seeing, wandering from place to place, flitting from one experience to another for the fun of it; the other treads the path that is consistent with man's true being and leads to his real home.

So long as one remains enslaved by time there will be birth and death... In reality there is nothing but the One Moment all along.

The above extracts from Ma's teachings amply reveal the greatness and universality of her spiritual being. Though outwardly her followers are mainly seen engaged in devotional rites and rituals, followers of jnana marga will find true Jnana there. It is the experience of aspirants of all paths that her grace is freely given to all alike. Above all, the purity, love and joy radiating out from her make her one whose very presence among mankind is purifying.

How much she has essentially in common with Bhagavan, his devotees can observe. In fact, "The Sat-Guru is One" as he said once to the humble writer of these lines.

MADAN MOHAN VARMA.

HINDU POLYTHEISM: By Alain Danielou.
(Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. Pp. 537,
Price 60 s.)

Hindu Polytheism is a magnificent work remarkable both for the matter and the manner of approach to the subject. M. Danielou brings to bear on this much-misunderstood subject a rare understanding and soul-perception that take both the writer and the reader straight into the heart of the Hindu Pantheon. He begins on the right note: to the Hindu, "The whole of Nature is but a symbol of a higher reality". All life is the projection of the Reality that is Divine and there is a close relation between the several aspects of the Reality in manifestation, on its own level, and the corresponding aspects of the creation put forth. The ancients conceived and experienced the Divine in its different formulations for purposes of manifestation, the Gods who are not only cosmic functionaries but also active powers in the individual life-scheme of man. The author of this book gives the background of this family of Gods, drawing upon the Vedas, the Upanishads and

other old texts; he then proceeds to deal with the significance, details of form, characteristic paraphernalia etc., of each major God, e.g., Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, etc. A separate section is devoted to the institution of Shakti worship and a very satisfying account is given of the Ten Maha Vidyas. The writer has taken great pains to authenticate every detail he has mentioned, though one would wish more discrimination had been exercised in the selection of material, especially from contemporary writers.

M. Danielou is keenly aware of the deeper truth of spiritual and psychological significance that runs through the whole system of Indian Religion in its various lines of expression. For instance, his explanation of the Mantra and the Yantra: "Name and form are for man the two essential aspects of manifestation, form being the direct expression of an idea in the Creator's mind and name the parallel process of the manifestation of the same idea through the human mind... The basic energies of the universe, which are the deities, can be approached through a mental creative process, that is, through words or through the perception of created forms. Deities are therefore represented in terms of both words and forms. In these two fields there are different degrees of abstraction. We can represent a deity through the description of its characteristics, its picture in words, or through symbolic elements of sound, that is, thought-form (*mantra*) or magic words, which correspond to its nature, though they may seem to us otherwise meaningless. Similarly we can picture a deity in an image portraying a number of symbolic attributes, or we can represent it through a diagram, a geometrical abstraction. These abstract or magic diagrams are known as *yantras*." (332). Also, "Mantras and yantras are therefore the abstract symbols, *mudra* (gesture) and *svara* (musical notes) are the subtle representations, and image and myth are the gross representations of the principles known as deities." (333). The author is at his best in the sections on Mantra, Yantra and Rituals. His exposition is rational to the core and one breathes in these pages the fresh air of the Spirit. His remarks on the principles underlying the Forms of Images, *murtis*, are worth noting (p. 364). On the subject of Incarnations he writes: "Among the Hindus the appearances of deities among men are not believed to be primarily historical facts, although they may centre round the story of a particular historical figure. Divine manifestations are the outward expressions of cosmic laws. The very characteristics of divinity are permanence and universality. Whatever divine manifestation may be envisaged it must take place at all times and on all

planes, in every aspect of the physical and the subtle world, in every microcosm as in the macrocosm. In each universe, for each cycle or subcycle, the same 'incarnations' of divinity take place." (p. 365).

The 33 beautiful art-plates of Indian sculpture and the appendix containing the Sanskrit texts quoted in the work add to the value of this publication. This is indeed a superb production worthy of the profound nature of the subject and also of the mature wisdom of the author.

M. P. PANDIT.

✓ **SANATANA DHARMA :** By Swami Bharati Krishna Tirtha. (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7, Pp. 210. Rs. 2.50.)

The late incumbent of the Govardhana Peetha of Puri, who attained Mahasamadhi as recently as 1960, had travelled widely throughout India and abroad. The Honorary General Secretary of the 'World Reconstruction Association' founded by him deposited with the publishers verbatim reports of the discourses he gave during his extensive tours. It is from these that the present book has been edited.

It begins by defining 'Sanatana Dharma' with philological exhaustiveness as the religion founded by the Eternal, the religion which is itself eternal, and the religion which rewards with eternal life all who follow it. But throughout the book the term is used in its current popular sense for the school of Hinduism which is opposed to all reform even in social matters. The Swami is a doughty champion of all things Hindu, including all practices prevalent in Hindu society.

He is also convinced that Arjuna conquered Mexico because among the ancient Mexicans there was reference to an ambidextrous archer (p. 32). Similarly, he finds the name 'Adam' related to the Sanskrit word *adhi*, 'first'. It was Milton who patriotically proclaimed that when the Almighty wanted to impart an idea to mankind He first divulged it to His Englishmen. The Swami's patriotism is no whit inferior: "India holds the same position in the world as the heart does in the body... In shape also both India and the heart are pear-like." (p. 194).

As regards Advaita, of which the Shankaracharyas of various Peethas are the authentic exponents, the Swami expounds it thus: "There is an underlying unity among all these things that are the limbs of the same tree.... the universe is so called because it is uni-, that is only one. That is Advaita. That is the monotheism that we have, the monism that we have." (p. 186). Is it?

OUR DUTY : By Swami Chandrasekhara Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7, Re. Price 42 s.)

This little book is a compilation from the and teachings of the late incumbent of the Sa Peetha of the Sringeri Advaita Math. In the first extract the Swami represents religion as 'S tanā Dharma', the law inherent in the universe, conformity with which naturally makes for spiritual health and violation of which for a state of spiritual morbidity. The whole book is a consistent exposition of this attitude. The Dharma is independent of time and founder and all codified doctrines are its handmaidens. All spiritual disciplines have the twofold purpose of aiding the aspirant in the progress of purification of his consciousness and of furthering his quest for the Self-subsistent One. He deplores theorising and discussion. Considering the remoteness of the final realization from our present state "it is mere waste of precious time and energy to probe into the ultimate Reality which can be realised only by the one who has realized it." (p. 28). What he commends is the practice of the constant presence of a Personal God as an unfailing companion. He urges constant ethical striving as the only convincing evidence of spiritual earnestness.

SUBLIME BIOGRAPHIES, TAMIL MYSTICISM : By Prof. K. R. R. Sastry. (The author, Dwaraka Colony, Madras-4, Pp. 72. Re. 1.)

Prof. Sastry here reproduces in book form the substance of some lectures he delivered at the Benares Memorial Library in Allahabad in 1948. "Because the term 'Mysticism' may drive away readers," he tells us in his Preface, "they are presented in 'Sublime Biographies'."

But why should the term 'Mysticism' drive away readers? Critical intellects of the highest order have been reverent students of mysticism and a vast body of literature has grown up around this mode of consciousness, deemed the highest. On the other hand the complaint may be legitimately made that not only is no definition or description of the mystic state offered but that none can even be inferred from the book.

Many of those mentioned are legendary figures. And a few lines containing such statements as "Agastya's name is mentioned in inscriptions at Siam and Cambodia or that 'Agastya prophesied' that Adi Sankara's mother that his (sic) great son would pass away at (sic) 32nd year" do not constitute a sublime biography.

Maharshi Ramana occupies seven pages, the largest number allotted to any mystic in the book, but even this chapter is neither consecutive biography nor coherent exposition.

PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM.

PRATYABHIJNAHRDAYAM : Sanskrit Text edited with English Translation and Notes by Jaideva Singh. (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi-6, Pp. 170, Price Rs. 10.)

The Saiva system of religion is considered by the editor of this book the most ancient faith in the world, going back to the calcolithic age or even earlier. At present we seem to have only three branches of it: the Saiva Siddhanta of the South, the Vira-Saiva of Deccan-Karnataka and the Saiva cult of Kashmir. Rajanaka Ksemaraja gave a succinct account of the philosophy of this last in his tenth century work *Pratyabhijnahrdayam*. Sri Jaideva Singh has done good work in editing this in a thoroughly up-to-date manner with a learned introduction, translation and notes.

In the introduction he gives an analysis of the twenty sutras forming the basis of the text, thus enabling the reader to grasp the main principles of this system. The notes are exhaustive and give the necessary information without being profuse. They are followed by a glossary of technical terms defining almost every word used in the text. The learned editor has done his work thoroughly.

In a work of this kind one might, however, expect the introduction to give a comparative estimate of the three schools and evaluate their philosophical importance, and this the editor has not done. He has narrowed down the scope of the introduction to a mere exposition and summary of the text.

The Pratyabhijna system teaches the Advaitic doctrine that the jiva (individual soul) is none other than Siva Himself and should be reminded of this and made to recognize it.

No student of Kashmir Saivism should miss studying this book.

The get-up is good and one hopes that when a new edition is called for the serious mistakes listed in the 'Errata' will not find a place in it.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

LAO TZU/TAO TE CHING : Translated by D. C. Lau, edited by E. V. Rieu. (Penguin: Indian Agents, Orient Longmans. Pp. 192. Price 3s. 6d.)

"By doing nothing you keep out of trouble." Such is a characteristic theme of the Lao Tzu book, an anthology, some form of which existed by the

beginning of the third century B.C. at the latest (p. 174). So far as this is its message the Chinese temperament has evidently changed radically. Less remarkable only than the I Ching, the Tao Te Ching has remained the most popular of all the ancient books of China.

Prof. Lau's introduction is nothing if not informative. Sociologically he ascribes great wisdom to the Tao Te Ching. "... in the nature of the universe, it is the submissive that survives and triumphs in the end," he reminds us (pp. 45/6). "Once this intuition is gained, further observation is unnecessary and serves only to confuse." Hence (but with a deeper than sociological meaning):

"Without stirring abroad
One can know the whole world.
Without looking out of the window
One can see the way of heaven.
The further one goes
The less one knows." (XLVII).

This, of course, refers to Tao as the Way. Consider also XIII: "The reason I have great trouble is that I have a body. When I no longer have a body what trouble have I?"

The sociological interpretation is only the outer side of the Tao Te Ching. Dr. Lau gives us nothing else, nothing identified as mystical or esoteric. Does 'tao' stand for the way as well as the Goal? Insofar as it is the name of the Unnameable, 'Tao' is equivalent to OM. In some passages 'Tao' evidently stands for the Self. It is unfortunate, therefore, that this translation fails to distinguish between 'it' and 'It' (meaning Tao) by spelling the latter with a capital letter.

In addition to this, terms in the Chinese text are sometimes used in two senses, the ordinary and the Taoist. And the student of comparative religion should be warned that this ancient Tao philosophy is very different from the modern so-called 'Taoist religion'. The editor makes no mention of this sad degeneration.

Characteristically the original author(s) lamented (twice, in LXX and LXXIII) that: "My words are very easy to understand and very easy to put into practice, yet no one in the world can understand them or put them into practice."

HEALTH, RADIATION AND HEALING : By M. Ash. (Darton, Longman & Todd, Price 18s.)

The beginning of Dr. Ash's book, dealing with rock and soil radiations, reminded me strongly of the vital force that the Holy Hill of Arunachala emits.

Then he writes (P. 123): "The concept I prefer is that our body is within the mind rather than the mind within the body. According to this concept...the manifestation of mind appears as an energy field arranged in a series of shell-like patterns around the body with which it is associated." This put me in mind of the Hindu doctrine of 'sheaths' to which Prof. K. Subrahmanyam alludes in his article 'Beyond Psychology' in the July 1964 issue of *The Mountain Path*.

"My realization of the power of the mind in healing," states the doctor (p. 128), "came after my experience of the therapeutic value of focusing the eye on the site of injury." Reading this I looked up at the photograph of Bhagavan beside me and thought of the power and beauty of his gaze.

Dr. Ash describes how he treats patients from a distance of many miles by radiating thoughts of benevolence and compassion. He was not always successful, he admits, but his failures were outnumbered by his many successes.

Thus aspects of the ancient wisdom contained in Hindu holy books are being confirmed by modern Western research. Dr. Ash concludes (p. 140): "In my view it is quite wrong to dismiss these healings as miraculous...It is my belief that nothing has occurred...that is not in accordance with natural laws, and that it is our present state of ignorance that prevents us from taking advantage of such laws."

F. ALLEN.

✓ THE APPRENTICE SAINT: By Louise Collis. (Michael Joseph, Pp. 259, Price 30s.)

Margery Kempe was a holy terror. Convinced of divine visitations, she shrieked, roared, sobbed and collapsed, especially during church services. Encouraged by God in visions, she publicly and constantly proclaimed his approval of her and his curse on her detractors. All levity and lewdness she rebuked. Drawn strongly to holy chastity, she at last persuaded her husband, John Kempe, to agree to it after reluctantly bearing him fourteen children. In her boisterous, colourful 15th Century world she made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Rome; and the company she travelled with tried one device after another to shake her off or at least to bind her to silence during meals. But every time she triumphed and turned up again, preaching, exhorting. Again and again she was arrested and tried for heresy in England (it was the time when the Lollards were considered dangerous), but always she emerged unscathed. A perfect dynamo of a woman. Sincere ecstatic she undoubtedly was, and she had her believers if she had also her detractors.

But, there is no sign of higher or mystic understanding in her visions and harangues.

Illiterate although of a prosperous merchant family, Margery dictated her turbulent memoirs to a priestly scribe in old age. She aspired to enter the hall of fame under the category of saint but succeeded under that of literature. However, after a brief period of fame the book disappeared from view and was recovered only in 1935. The present biography written around it gives a fine picture of 15th Century life and of an extraordinary woman.

Her book is obtainable in the original, but anyone tempted to buy it should be warned that the language and spelling are much farther from modern English than in most 14th or 15th Century books such as Chaucer or the 'Cloud of Unknowing'.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT ACCORDING TO VEDANTA: By Swami Prabhavananda. (Allen and Unwin, Pp. 110, Price 16s.)

In a review of the 'Vedanta Press' edition of the book which appeared in *The Mountain Path* of January 1964 I remarked, that the author did not go very deep into Christ's teaching. The longer version of the book now to hand completely removes this fault. Particularly illuminating is the exposition of the doctrine of the Avatara. Altogether, it is a book that goes far beyond theorising and is luminous with indubitable spiritual understanding.

SAGITTARIUS

✓ HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP, INTERPRETER OF INDIAN THOUGHT: By Wilfried Nothmann with a preface by Dr. Zakir Hussain. (Max Mueller Bhavan Publications, South Asian Studies, edited by Dr. Heimo Rau, New Delhi. Pp. 108. Price not stated.)

Our congratulations go to the Directors of Max Mueller Bhavan for placing before the Indian public this outstanding contribution on the life and work of one of the greatest interpreters of India to the western world. Prof. Glasenapp approached the religion, philosophy, literature and art of India with respect and devotion as a seeker of spiritual treasures. As our Vice-President said in his preface he was a guru to his students, young and old who gathered round him to listen to his lectures at the Universities of Koenigsberg and Tuebingen where he set a great example to his colleagues working in the field of Indian studies. His approach in connection is unique for to him India, both in her outer life and her inner world, is eternal and immortal. He urged his students to understand India and proceed with their work in this spirit. If the

is a new enthusiasm and interest for Indian studies to-day, among both scholars and the general public we can say without fear that the credit should go to pioneers like Prof. Glasenapp and his esteemed contemporary Prof. Heinrich Zimmer who put their life and soul into the work of interpreting Indian culture and quenching the thirst of those who sought such a source.

Wilfried Noelle, who had the privilege of sitting at the feet of this great professor, must be congratulated on placing this monograph before the public. We can recommend it to all who are interested to come into contact with efforts made in the western world towards understanding the Indian world in all its perspectives.

DR. V. N. SHARMA.

JOURNAL

KALVATH SHAN (meaning 'Abode of Meditation') is a new quarterly published from Range Estate, Wattala, Hunupitiya, Ceylon, edited by Fuard Uduman, with Dr. Md. Cassim and Upali Samarasekera as associate editors. Its purpose or programme is very similar to that of *The Mountain Path* with the difference, however, that it starts from a mainly Islamic basis. The English is good and the get-up attractive. Particularly pleasing are the quotations from Sufi saints. We extend to it our sincere good wishes. May it prosper and expand.

However, its price is considerably higher—Rs. 4 per single copy. Rs. 15 annually.



This photograph taken by the Polish visitor Florian Staszewski shows how austere is life and work in the Ashram office. It should be said that people do not normally sit in meditation there. They are usually engaged in work or conference.

SOUVENIR

The Sai Baba Mission of Coimbatore has brought out an excellent 1964 Souvenir Volume. Many leading Sai bhaktas have contributed articles. A wide catholicity is shown by the inclusion of articles on other Spiritual Masters also and on various aspects of Hinduism. The Souvenir is well illustrated, most impressive being the beautiful and little known photograph of Sai Baba on the cover. It is mostly in English but there is a Tamil section also.

INDIA

By THALIA GAGE

INDIA rises like a fountain
Within me,
From the triangle of Aurānachala
It rises in showers of fire
To Mt. Kailas,
Holy and submitted.
Above my being.
India rises like a fountain
Within me,
Feeding my soul.

Ashram Bulletin

ONE YEAR OLD

So high is infant mortality among periodicals that a journal's first anniversary may be said to be its most important. *The Mountain Path* is crossing this difficult milestone with flying colours. Indeed, surprised by its own success, it has found itself under the necessity of reprinting its first two issues, which had sold beyond expectation. In the service of our great Master and by his Grace, we count on a future development as favourable as that already past.

* * *

Bound Copies

We are bringing out bound copies of the four 1964 issues in a single volume. This will be available, postage free. India Rs. 6.00 ; Foreign 12 sh. or. \$ 1.80

* * *

Planned Issues

Readers will have observed that each issue of *The Mountain Path* is woven around some central theme—that of last July on the need for effort, of October on jnana and bhakti, of the present issue on karma-marga. Our April issue will be mainly concerned with Tantrism and July with questions of Guidance and Realization.

* * *

Missing Mail

A considerable amount of foreign mail was destroyed in a conflagration in Bombay on Oct. 26th. Any one who wrote to us about that time and has not received an acknowledgment is advised to write again. Also any one who was expecting a communication from us posted about that date and has not received it should inform us.

* * *

NAVARATHRI

The ten-day festival of the Shakti or Divine Energy fell this year on Oct. 6th to 15th. The Shakti is worshipped in three forms, as Kali, the Spouse of Siva and aspect of tamas, Lakshmi, the Spouse of Vishnu and aspect of sattva, and Saraswati, the Spouse of Brahma and aspect of rajas (Tamas, in this use of the word, is, of course, the



Golden Bull — Karthigai Festival

darkness in the sense of ignorance or denial but in the sense of the Divine Darkness in which all forms are merged). The temple at our Ashram is built over the shrine of Bhagavan's mother. During these ten days the deity is taken out of the shrine and exhibited and is arrayed as each of the three Goddesses in turn, indicating that all three are one.

* * *

KARTHIGAI DEEPAM

The Karthigai ten-day festival was held from Nov. 11 to 19. This is peculiar to Tiruvannamalai and crowds flocked into the town from all around. The gods are taken in procession, each day with different decorations and vahanas, some of them very colourful and picturesque. The festival culminates on the final day, the day of Deepam (Beacon), when at sunset a beacon is lit on the summit of Arunachala. It is a moment of great enthusiasm and rejoicing. An account of its symbolism and mythology is given in the articles on Arunachala by T. K. S. in our issues of April and July 1964.



Huge RATHA (Car) — Karthigai Festival

The beacon is entirely fed by ghee (clarified butter) brought in donation to the Tiruvannamalai Temple authorities who take it up to the summit where a large metal cauldron stands on a flat outcrop of stone. It usually burns two or three days and nights.

This year Nov. 19th was a cloudy, rainy day; nevertheless the clouds were high at sunset and the beacon was clearly visible. Later in the evening many devotees and visitors walked round the hill, most of them barefoot, some in small groups and some silent and alone, some singing Bhagavan's *Marital Garland of Letters* with its refrain *Arunachala-Siva*, of which a translation is published in our issue of Oct. 1964.

PERCEIVING THE PRESENCE

This episode by Ethel Merston is particularly interesting since it shows how a Divine Presence can be translated into two quite different forms by the senses of two simultaneous beholders.

It was the annual day of Saint Arunagirinathar,* August 15, 1964. Bhajan parties were to come from all over the Province in bus-loads to chant at the great Temple of Tiruvannamalai and at Sri Ramanashram.

I, who love good bhajans, was feeling very sad that I could not get to the ashram to hear them and was lamenting the fact to my friend Vasanti who had come from Madras for a few hours' visit a day or so before the event. "Don't worry," she said, "Krishna Iyer, my friend, is the leader of one of the parties and I will ask him to come and chant to you with his group in your room." That seemed too good to be possible.

Yet three days later, in the kindness of their hearts, they came, and up here in my eyrie amongst the tree tops, with the sacred Hill towering in the background, the little group of bhajan singers sang their hymns of praise, Krishna Iyer and others losing themselves in ecstasy.

Suddenly, as the chanting grew in intensity, I became aware of the whole room lit up with a glowing golden light; all was alive, pulsating in golden waves filling every cranny up to the very top of the high-pitched roof. The whole room was transfigured, the whole atmosphere so thrilling that I felt overwhelmed by the goodness of God; and by Him indeed. Soon afterwards the bhajan came to an end. They had been chanting for over an hour. Almost immediately Krishna Iyer said, "Do you

* For mention of which see our *Ashram Bulletin* of October 1964.

know the wonderful thing that happened just now? As we were singing, I saw Bhagavan walk across the terrace and come into the room. Leaning on his stick and rubbing his chin and face with his other hand, he stood there smiling at us all. And then, after a little while, looking at each of us, he turned and walked out across the terrace again and disappeared."

And this was just when I had seen the room illumined and felt that great joy. The room had indeed been blest, and the Bhajan party, too, for their compassion on the sick devotee.

FROM VENEZUELA

Among our many visitors during this period, Shanti Devi (Olga Mago) was notable as being the first from Venezuela. She writes: "Some years ago in Venezuela I read a book in which the author describes an interview with the Maharshi. The description of Bhagavan left a vivid impression on my mind and, wanting to know more about him, I ordered a few books from the Ashram, which I read with great interest.



Olga Mago

At that time the possibility of visiting this Ashram seemed remote. Shortly after an Indian Guru, a Swami, visited Venezuela on a world lecture tour. One day he asked me whether I would like to visit India. Although it did not seem feasible, I replied: 'I think I should', to which he heartily agreed. He gave me much encouragement and suggested that I should visit Sri Ramanashram. Henceforth all obstacles to my trip were removed in a way that seemed truly miraculous. He said: 'The Lord Siva will take care of you.' My hesitation was removed and I undertook the trip with full confidence in the Lord's protection.

I can truly say that my coming to Tiruvannamalai has been one of my best experiences since undertaking my pilgrimage almost two years ago.

There is something unique and hard to express this holy place, something indefinable and subtle the atmosphere. In the Old Meditation Hall I have felt Bhagavan's presence. His compassionate glance touches my heart and tears flow involuntarily. While meditating on the Hill the world seems to recede and there is only a deep Peace."



Kitty

RETURN

Mrs. Douglas, who was brought up here and known to the older devotees as 'Kitty' came back from England for a brief visit. It made a strong impression on her and she is planning to come for a longer stay next month.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. K. Shiva Rao first came to Sri Ramanashram in the early thirties. He fell under the spell of Bhagavan and, deciding to devote the rest of his life to sadhana, gave up a thriving and lucrative practice to become the Ashram doctor. He also founded and equipped the Ashram dispensary.



After Bhagavan left the body in 1950, Dr. Shiva Rao went to stay for some time at Anandashram. Later, however, he came back here, where he settled for the rest of his life. He died on October 1964, at the age of 79 after only a single illness.

Dr. Shiva Rao

Dr. Shiva Rao had over seven thousand rupee savings at the time of his death, the whole of which he left as an endowment to the Ashram dispensary.

NOTE ON "IDENTITY"

Each "other" becomes (or is) a "self" to itself, and each "self" becomes (or is) an "other" to another "self". That is what "individuals" are.

— WEI WU WEI.

INTRODUCING . . .

Since this issue is devoted to karma marga, we have chosen two householder devotees to introduce this time.

DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI was known in Bhagavan's lifetime as a great bhakta. He was captivated by the resplendent beauty of Bhagavan and



Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami

when he left his busy medical practice in Madras to come here for a few days or a few hours he used to bring his camera and take photographs. Indeed it is mainly due to him that the Ashram has a large and varied collection of photos of Bhagavan. In recognition of this the Sarvadhikari appointed him official Ashram photographer. Some of his collection he has had enlarged to life size on canvas and painted over in oils or water colour. One such is the picture shown in our issue of April 1964 that is kept on the couch where Bhagavan used to sit in the Old Hall.

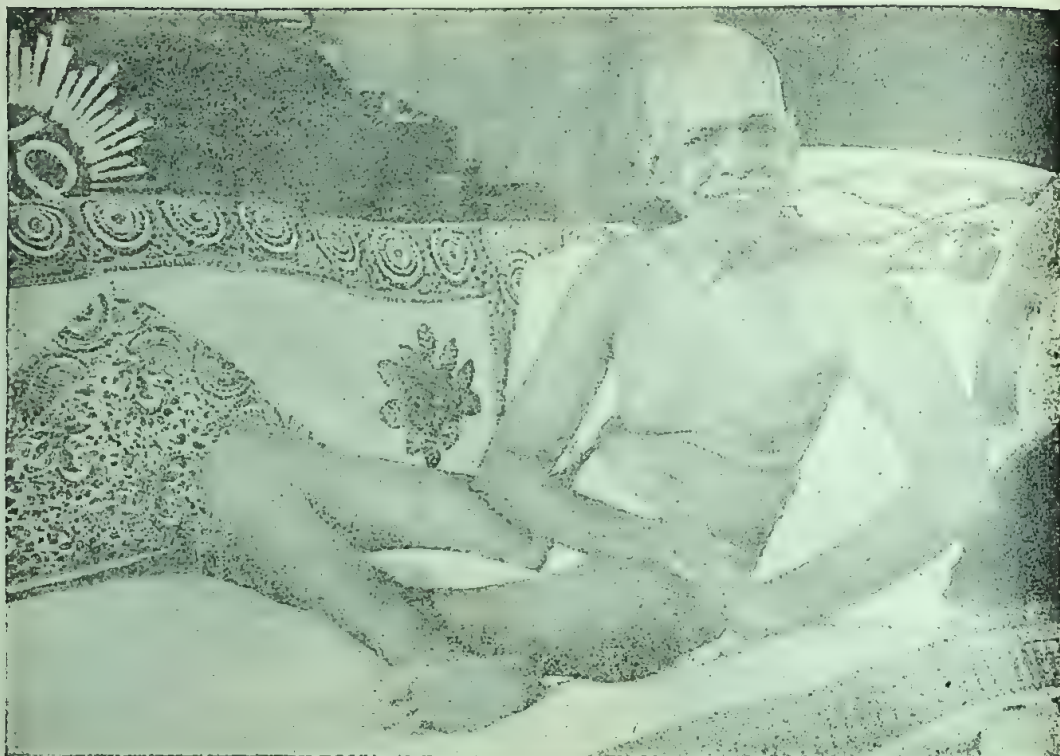
When Bhagavan left the body Dr. Krishnaswami called a meeting of devotees at his house in Madras to pledge continued loyalty to the Ashram and its administration and to offer what help they could in the difficult times ahead. He was a member of the provisional Ashram Committee that was then set up and that continued up to January 1964 when, as mentioned in our Ashram Bulletin of April 1964, it was replaced by a Board of Trustees on a scheme laid down by the Government. According to this, two members were to be nominated by the Ashram



President and two by the Government, with the Ashram President himself as the fifth. Dr. Krishnaswami was one of the two members nominated by the Ashram President.

Bereft of the physical presence of Bhagavan, Dr. Krishnaswami turned seriously to the study of doctrine and amassed wide learning. This was vivified by profound understanding. Indeed, many who had known him only as a bhakta were surprised by the mastery of doctrine shown in his article 'Outside the Scriptures' in our inaugural issue and again by his short note on 'Jnana and Bhakti' in that of October 1964.





MRS. FIROZA TALEYARKHAN is of a prominent Parsi family of Bombay. In the days of British India she moved in the highest society, knowing maharajas and viceroys personally. She had, however, an urge for a more meaningful life and this inclined her to seek out more than one swami and guru. She met Gandhi and was strongly drawn to him and to his work. The real turning point came, however, when she came to Tiruvannamalai. She was completely overwhelmed by Bhagavan. Withdrawing from the society life she had previously led, she built a small house here and settled down. It is a practical illustration of Bhagavan's true catholicity that she never felt any need to change from her Zoroastrian faith to Hinduism and he never urged her to.

Mrs. Taleyarkhan has always been an active and energetic force in Ashram affairs. Especially in the troubled times following Bhagavan's maha samadhi she was a staunch and loyal defender of the Ashram and its President and had much to do with rallying the support of devotees. Those days are passed now, but the President still finds her loyalty a strong support. She, like Dr. Krishnaswami, was a member of the original Ashram Committee, and she is the other one of the two members of the

present Board of Trustees appointed by the Ashram President.



Mrs. Taleyarkhan

It is largely due to her influence that so many Parsis have been drawn to Bhagavan and so many members of the former princely families of India



Letters TO THE EDITOR

Krishnamurthi surely needs no defence from me. I have never met nor heard him. Yet I do think it only fair for you to know that someone understands him quite differently, even to desecrating his words some self-illuminating gleams.

LE ROY A. BORN,
New York.

I do want to thank you for your July editorial. Krishnamurti has troubled me for years. By a strange coincidence I was again reading 'First and Last Freedom' when your magazine came. I had always thought I just wasn't intelligent enough—I came so confused.

CLARICE CAVANAGH,
Palm Desert, California.

I didn't feel that Miss Byles was very open-minded, did she seem to put herself in the places where we could learn most. The shouts and sticks of a monastery are alarming only to the most out- of outsiders. The monks and lay disciples know love their teacher.

GARY SYNDER, San Francisco, California.

The Mountain Path is splendid. It seems far superior to any similar magazine and is an indication of the depth and degree of spiritual consciousness and it. I am continuing to tell people about it and trust it flourishes, as well as all your other work. I appreciated the article on Zen in the July issue. I feel that Zen as it is practised is far from the ideal.

ANN KUY, Avon Lakes, Ohio.

May I say how very glad I am that I have found your publication. It is a source of great interest and joy to pilgrims on the Path, ever searching and seeking that Light which shall bring inner peace and certainty of our eternal destiny.

I appreciate very much the sentiments expressed in the beautiful poem 'The Few' in the January issue. *The Mountain Path* is truly a beacon light to the 'awakened soul'. May it long continue to be an inspiration and help to all who truly seek.

MISS E. OVEREND, Bradford, England.

Thank you for *The Mountain Path* No. 4, which I have just received. I feel that there is a lot of deep reading and thinking on every page and as usual I will do it slowly to make the pleasure last.

I wonder if we could have more articles like 'The Secrets of Arunachala' and 'The Mythology of Arunachala' by T. K. S.? For me they throw light on many things I have not yet understood.

ARUNA, Paris.

(To the Managing Editor)... Now let me speak to you about that extraordinary article on Sai Baba. How fascinating it was to learn of the existence of this holy man whose personality and mode of living differed so greatly from Bhagavan's but whose teaching was in essence so close. The quotations from them included in the article had a tremendous impact upon me. "Look at me whole-heartedly and I in turn will look at you whole-heartedly." "Just remember that the Guru's tortoise-like loving glance brings happiness." "Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully that the Guru is the sole actor or doer." What words could better

describe what actually takes place between Bhagavan and a devotee!

MRS. HAZEL STAFFORD, Paris.

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The greatness of the Chinese saint appealed to me very much. What penance and perseverance and will power! My little practice of meditation is nowhere compared to him.

Being a Tamilian, I already knew of Arunachala (Annamalai), but how the Maharshi's poem shows its greatness! Another Tamil poet has written that those who pray to Annamalai will get rid of all their karma.

R. AMURTHANANTHA,
Colombo, Ceylon.

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I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Editor and members of the staff as well as all those who contribute towards creating such an interesting magazine. I find the articles very helpful, though some are beyond my capacity to understand as yet.

The photograph of Sri Ramana Maharshi is quite remarkable, giving off a spiritual quality as if his presence was actually with one.*

MRS. ALLAN WYLLIE,
Victoria, B.C., Canada.

* It is—Editor.

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The October number of *The Mountain Path* is extraordinarily good. *The Marital Garland of Letters* is one of the most moving things I have ever read: almost every word finds an echo in my heart. But when I go on to the 'Forty Verses' I begin to ask questions! Yet I now that there is deep truth in it.

FR. GRIFFITHS,
Kurismala Ashram, Kerala.

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One night I had a dream in which Sri Ramana appeared and showed me what I believe was his radiant Life. He appeared before a screen of brilliant Light. The Light was not stationary, however; it appeared to pulsate with the very life of Life! And all that time he was smiling, the smile that has already won so many hearts and will continue to win many more in the days to come. Throughout the dream not a word was said on either side.

I write this in the hope that others may benefit from it, and also because I would like to know

what others who are more qualified to judge of it.

THONG YIN YE
Kedah, Mal.

All will think that it was a sign of Grace.

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I dreamed that the Maharshi said to me twenty years ago he might have known something about psychology. The dream lasted no longer than this. It seems to me that the point is to have been not to be too concerned with psychological speculation or questions but to concentrate on the real business.

JOHN CARROLL
Napa, California

A good interpretation—that psychology is something you should have outgrown. Psychology is the qualities of the ego, whereas Self-enquiry changes its very existence. As Bhagavan says in 'What I?'; it would be foolish to examine the mind that you sweep up in order to throw away.

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Dilip Kumar Roy's article 'How I came to know Maharshi' made fascinating reading. I was reminded of Somerset Maugham's description of his meeting with the Maharshi in his book 'Points of View' published under the caption 'The Saint'. Here, telling us how he felt in the presence of the great saint, he says: "You felt that something strange was taking place that made you inclined to hold your breath." Dilip Kumar Roy, speaking about his feelings in the presence of Maharshi's presence, also uses the word 'strange' when he tells us about "... my heart aheaving with a strange exaltation."

B. G. R. KRISHNAMA, Secunderabad

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"The really sensible thing, therefore," says, "would be to stop writing articles and comparing religions and get down to the practical business of killing it (the ego), no matter by what means or through what religion." May I add that the really super-sensible thing would be to communicate with others and take them also along with us.

S. GANESAN,

That is what THE MOUNTAIN PATH is trying to do.

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How I wish you could give us all a good translation of the Bhagavad Gita in serial form in *The Mountain Path* and then publish it when completed. That would be doing two jobs in one, and what a lasting blessing you would confer on a needy world! *

And please can you publish some instructions on using the Buddhist rosary of 108 beads.**

MISS EBBANA GRACE BLANCHARD,
Shrewsbury.

I find the magazine by far the most outstanding in its field. I wish to congratulate Mr. Osborne for his superb work as editor: the quality of the articles is most superior; the book reviews are a delight, fair, precise and valuable; the Ashram Bulletin is a very happy feature which brings Sri Ramanashram as a living presence into the home. May Bhagavan continue to bless your efforts.

M. MC BRIDE PANTON,
St. Petersburg, Florida,

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* We are considering taking up serialised translations beginning with the Gita.

** We plan to publish an article on the use and symbolism of the rosary in various religions, probably in April 1966.

—Editor.

* * *

Thank you for the excellent first year of *The Mountain Path*. Each of the issues has been better than its predecessor and it has an honoured place in many lives I am sure.

Here in England a few of Bhagavan's devotees have set aside 10 p.m. on Thursday nights to meditate together. We cannot meet in form but space is no obstacle to true meeting and we would welcome any others as yet unknown to join us at that time.

W. J. DALTON, Sale, Cheshire.

An excellent scheme, but let those who join in remember the divergencies of clock time. For instance, 10 p.m. in England means 3-30 next morning in India—Editor.

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I felt I must write to thank you all at Sri Ramanashram for the pleasure that the first year's issues of *The Mountain Path* have given me and those to whom I have shown them. Each issue surpasses the last. The copies are worth their weight in gold, especially in the spreading of Bhagavan's teachings.

Do you think that some subscribers would wish to place their names on a list for writing to each other?

RONALD HODGES,
P.O. Box 3492, Nairobi, Kenya.

Any readers who would like their names on such a list please write in and say so. It seems a good idea for people with interest and understanding to be linked up throughout the world—Editor.

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We read the October issue of *The Mountain Path* full of appreciation for the understanding and knowledge many of the articles contain and feeling that it opened new doors for us. As soon as we are settled we would like to subscribe to this excellent magazine.

ILSE and GERD LEDERMANN, Rozelle,
N.S.W., Australia.

* * *

I would like to receive copies of *The Mountain Path* for life and I enclose a money order for £10. I offer gratitude hourly to the Maharshi for his love, and the news from the Ashram would give me great joy. Since prayers have been offered on my behalf at Arunachala I have received a great deal of love from friends and I am exceedingly grateful.

I offer love and prayers also to the Madonna of the Christian Church and to Jesus with great benefit. I offer prayer to the Madonna and Jesus on behalf of those who seek realization through the grace of the Maharshi... May the blessings of God fall upon all those who offer devotion to the Maharshi, and I send my love to all these people.

PEGGY CREME PILLING, London.

* * *

I would just like to congratulate you on the excellence of your magazine *The Mountain Path*. Each number grows better and I have been instrumental in introducing it to several friends who are appreciating it as much as I. The fact that it comes direct from the Ashram carries its own special blessings. Long may it continue.

DORIS GOTT, London.

* * *

Thank you very much for the space you allow for questions and your wonderfully helpful answers. This correspondence tends to bring with it a sense of togetherness on what J. Wispelwey describes as the road that can be "lonesome at times"; for indeed many of us would have chosen very diffe-

rent members of our household and quite a different environment, but it is good to be fully convinced that our station is appointed by the wisdom of the Eternal.

Is there an answer as to why the body of Sri Ramana was so sorely afflicted in his illness? 'The Infinite Way' (Joel Goldsmith) teaches that "there is only one reason why healings do not come through: there is a barrier or lack of receptivity." I am puzzled because it seemed as though in Pure Consciousness the cells of the body were glorified (perhaps the state of Yogananda's body is an example) and that a disease could not affect them unless perhaps it is absorbed from another person.

VIROA GUMMER, Auckland, New Zealand.

The suffering of spiritual Masters—Christ, Ramakrishna, Milarepa, as well as Ramana Maharshi—is a difficult question. From one point of view the answer may be that they take on themselves the evil karma of their followers: "He that taketh on himself the sins of the world."

Even apart from that, the attitude of the Maharshi towards sickness is different from that of Joel Goldsmith. It is that birth and death, growth and decay, health and sickness, creation and dissolution are equally phases of the process of nature and it would be illogical to want one phase without the other. The spiritual man accepts what comes, decay no less than growth, sickness no less than health. Therefore he did not encourage his followers to engage in spiritual healing. When asked about his illness he said: "The body itself is a disease." This meant that the entire process of nature, both growth and decay, has to be transcended. This is a more profound and ultimate viewpoint, but the other also is legitimate and can therefore be effective, as many healers and healers have found. This question will be dealt with in the later issue of The Mountain Path. It is enough to ask here whether there was any individual body in the form of the Maharshi who could deal with health rather than sickness or want to change the course of nature.—Editor.

"He is enlightened" or "he is not enlightened": What difference could there be? In either case he is still there.

"Emptiness is *not being there* to be empty!

That also is the meaning of "poverty".

—WEI WU WEI.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL. II

APRIL, 1965

No. 2

SELF-BUILDING

[EDITORIAL]

The human mind turned downwards takes cognizance of the world reported to it by the senses; turned upwards it receives intuitional knowledge and directions from pure intelligence, which is its source and essence. The light it receives from above guides it in its behaviour towards the world spread out below.

That is how it should be, but in fact a supposititious self ties a knot at the level of mind, choking off the flow of light from above and claiming direction of the revealed or manifested world below. The result is that a man resembles an old-fashioned egg-timer with the waist choked: that is an upper and a lower cylinder with the passage between the two constricted and almost blocked.

Therefore the mind finds itself not merely cognizing and arranging the world reported by the senses but striving to rule it and in fact ruled by it. This is the cruel paradox, for by desiring one thing and fearing another the pseudo-self or ego subordinates itself to the senses and the world they report. Thus it comes to be torn between

conflicting passions and subject to the tyranny of events.

The resultant state is best summed up in the Buddhist Four Noble Truths. There is suffering — not in the sense that life is all pain and no pleasure but that a man is vulnerable to events and will eventually be vanquished by them in the form of sickness, old age and death. There is a cause for suffering — the rise of this supposititious self. There is a cure for suffering — the demolition of this self.

And, the fourth truth — there are a number of ways to this cure. On the whole they fall into three categories. The first is through knowledge, by discovering that this pseudo-self really is pseudo and has no real being; but real integral discovery, not merely theoretical acquiescence. The second is through devotion or submission: provisional acceptance of the pseudo-self as an entity but insistence on its complete submission to the true Self above it and uncomplaining acceptance of the sense-revealed world outside it.

The third is a technique of re-establishing contact between the upper (inverted) and lower (upright) cones, thereby restoring man's true nature and rectifying his stunted perceptions and faculties, while leaving to a later stage the final demolition of the pseudo-self that warped or stunted them by cutting them off from their source. This is the underlying principle of Tantrism. It brings about the wedding of the mind with the Spirit.

Who is it that aspires? Pure being can't;
Nor can that true function of the mind —
To accept, cognize, respond. Between
them — what?

However well disguised, the evil ghost.
Yet effort must be made. But without
desire.

Till there shall come the union of the
two —

Pure Being and intelligence of mind —
Through elimination of what stands
between.

Methods are many; this alone the task.

It is seldom that any path falls exclusively into any one of the three categories outlined above; however one or another of them will predominate.

What has always proved fascinating in paths of the tantric, as of the yogic, variety is that they develop higher powers and perceptions in the aspirant during the course of his quest instead of leaving them to flow through spontaneously on its completion. They carry on the tasks of demolition and building simultaneously. Every path combines the two processes of contraction and expansion — squeezing the ego until it is small enough to pass through the eye of a needle and expanding the mind to infinite pure intelligence. But on an Advaitic path there is very little expansion until the contraction is completed.

Herein lies the attraction of a tantric path, but also the danger; for the ego will attempt to clutch at the new or expanded powers and use them in its own right. To guard against this it is essential to work

under an expert and give him implicit obedience. Indeed, it is probable that most magic and occultism has its origin in the misuse of powers by those who have proceeded far enough along this type of path to acquire them but then shrunk back from immolation of the ego. It is the most technical type of path and requires skill in means wedded to inflexible integrity of purpose.

Tantrism is an integral part of Hinduism. It is held by its followers to be co-eval with the Vedas. Its extant written texts are of a later date but that is nothing to go by since a religious tradition is normally handed down by oral transmission before being put in writing, and this is naturally much more so in the case of a secret tradition like Tantrism confined to initiates.

Some scholars claim to have found the origins of Tantrism in the non-Aryan Indus-Valley civilization or among the Mongol peoples north of India, but really the question is not very important. It is not to be supposed that these peoples were without any technique of spiritual training, and whether this had more affinity with Yoga, Tantrism or Shamanism can have only an academic interest. Certain it is that Tantrism is an intrinsic form of Hinduism and has been so from remote antiquity.

In one sense Tantrism might be held to be more of a popular religion than that of the Vedas, being open to persons of all castes and both sexes, whereas Vedic ritual was to be performed only by those of the upper castes and most of it only by men. In another sense, however, it was and is more restricted, not being a religion for a whole community but (like Yoga in India and Shamanism among other peoples) a path of spiritual development available only to those who are initiated into it. It can best be described as a science of spiritual development having both its theory and practice, like any other science, and verifiable by the results of its practice.

Its scriptures, therefore, the Agamas or Tantras as they are called, are on the whole

less concerned with theoretical exposition than the Upanishads and more with practical directions for sadhana. For this reason they are apt to be cryptic and abstruse so as to guard their secrets from unauthorised students. However one cannot generalise about this: for instance two Agamas which express pure Advaitic doctrine were translated from Sanskrit into Tamil by Bhagavan and are contained in English among his 'Collected Works'.¹

One might say that Tantrism is pre-eminently a polytheistic form of Hinduism, consisting largely of the invocation and worship of various gods and goddesses; and yet, paradoxical as it may appear, it is at the same time pre-eminently self-reliant, being a science of development of the potentialities latent in man. What resolves the paradox is the understanding that the same formless Spirit which manifests as the universe with all its forms and powers manifests simultaneously as and in the individual. Therefore the same forces which appear to manifest outwardly as gods and goddesses are to be developed as latent potentialities of the sadhaka himself.

Those who are accustomed to think of religion as a combination of belief and devotion may query whether technical and what seem even to be mechanical disciplines really can lead man to recover his potentially divine state as is claimed in Tantra and Yoga. What they forget, and what almost all Western dabblers in Yoga overlook in practice, is that the first two steps of Yoga are Yama and Niyama, both implying control of character and behaviour, the former more in a negative sense and the latter in a positive. Yama involves rejection not only of egoistic and immoral actions but even desires and Niyama contentment and aspiration. The ethical basis of Tantrism may not be formulated in such detail but it is no less obligatory. In Hermetism also, the nearest Western parallel to Tantrism, it was constantly stressed that the secrets of the

true alchemy would reveal themselves only to the pure in heart. This, like everything else in the divine science, is quite logical and practical, since a man whose desires are turned downwards or outwards to worldly things cannot at the same time be aspiring upwards, or at any rate not with sufficient force and persistence to achieve anything. Even a physical machine will not generate enough power to accomplish its work if the steam leaks out through unauthorised apertures. Neither spasmodic effort nor a general vague desire for achievement can so vivify the technique of sadhana as to make it effective. A steadily burning upward turned flame of rightly guided aspiration is necessary for that. In fact the more elevated a man's consciousness becomes and the more his higher potentialities are activated the more dangerous to him is a divided state of mind with desires pulling him both ways.

Basic to Tantrism is the worship of Siva and Shakti, God and Goddess. Siva is God as pure Being and Consciousness, that is to say viewed statically; the Shakti or Mother is the Divine Energy. This is equivalent to the Christian conception of the Logos; and it may be that in Mediaeval Hermitism this conception was also developed into a divine science. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men."² Word for word this would apply to the Shakti. It is often stressed that she is not only with Siva but is Siva, that she is with Him from the beginning, from all eternity, that she is the Mother and Creator of all that is. Therefore prayer is directed mainly to the Mother. God as the Father, as pure Being, pure Consciousness, does not take cognizance of the individual; it is the Mother, the creative and redemptive energy, the Logos, who creates the seeming universe of the individual and draws him back out of it to realized Oneness with the Father.

¹ Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, and Rider & Co., London.

² St. John, I, 1-4.

There are various Tantric techniques but central to them is Kundalini marga. Kundalini could best be described as the spiritual vitality of a man or as his shakti. In ordinary man she is a serpent sleeping coiled up (*kundali*) at the base of his spine. She has to be awakened and directed up the sushumna, the central column along the spine. Along this there are seven chakras or wheels which she has to pierce on her route. Each of them has its colour, form, symbolism, and opens the way to a new mode of consciousness with its attendant powers. Highest of them is the sahasrara or thousand-petalled lotus in the crown of the head. This is the seat of Siva, and its activation (which may also come spontaneously to aspirants who do not follow the path of Kundalini) is the union of Siva and Shakti. It is like the blazing of a thousand suns with indescribable lightness and bliss.

The awakening of Kundalini and her direction to one after another of the stages of ascent is achieved by a sadhana which employs breath-control, incantation and concentration on the centre to be activated and its symbolism. It is, needless to say, a highly technical path.

This is the barest and briefest description of the path of Kundalini, omitting all the subtleties and technicalities. What has to be stressed is that, on the one hand, the sushumna and chakras are not physical organs nor Kundalini a physical force (although its rising has powerful physical repercussions); nor, on the other hand, are they imaginary or metaphorical. They are very real and potent: not a part of the purely physical state of man (if there is such a thing) but a means by which to transcend it.

THE DANCE

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Away, away!
 Into the sky I dance!
 Bending, swaying lightfoot leaping,
 Tireless staying, rhythm keeping,
 Up, in the air!
 The rhythm and sway
 Now here, now there!
 Swift and smooth as a maiden's glance,
 I sway and I glide
 And nimbly I ride,
 With never a care,
 As inly I throb to the cosmic tide:
 No outer step, no body stride.

* * * *

Thus the rhythm keeps its track
 In a stiff old body with arthritic back.

TANTRIC SADHANA

By DR. I. K. TAIMNI

A study of the tantric methods of attaining higher states of consciousness may give the impression that the process of acquiring Self-Realization is to a large extent mechanical, using this word in its widest sense. This seems to be anomalous in view of the fact that the Reality which is the object of realization is the essence of consciousness and it is hard to see how this can be brought about by the manipulation of forces working through established centres within the physical or super-physical bodies. The anomaly is, however, resolved if we remember that although the realization of our spiritual nature in varying degrees is not a mechanical process, the establishment of connections or communications between the different vehicles of consciousness is — almost as much so, in fact, as the connecting up of electric circuits. If, therefore, a soul which has already evolved spiritually and attained higher states of consciousness incarnates in a new body, the mechanical connection of the centres in the new physical body with those in the subtler bodies floods the lower physical consciousness with the higher knowledge or consciousness and makes it appear as if this realization had been brought about by purely mechanical means. As a matter of fact, spiritual unfoldment follows its normal course in the long life of the soul but in its advanced stages it may appear to be accomplished very rapidly and sometimes through the mere manipulation of different kinds of subtle forces, because when a soul incarnates in a new physical body it recapitulates very rapidly the progress it has already made in previous lives.

Tantric sadhana is really meant for such highly evolved souls as are mature and come into this world to continue intensively, or to complete, their inner unfoldment. They have already attained a high degree of moral and spiritual development and all that is necessary is to connect their subtle vehicles

with the physical body so as to put them in conscious touch with the subtle planes.

Knowledge of the structure and way of manipulating a machine is absolutely necessary if it is to be worked properly and safely; and the human machine consisting of the physical and subtle vehicles is far more complex and difficult to operate than any merely physical machine can be. Hence the need for a competent guru who knows it thoroughly and can manipulate it expertly. A sadhaka rash enough to dabble in practical occultism without the necessary know-how or under the guidance of an incompetent guru is inviting disaster. So long as he confines himself to doing asanas and the simpler forms of pranayama (breath control) there is no danger, but as soon as he begins to practise more technical pranayama involving kumbhaka with the object of arousing the kundalini without the necessary moral preparation and the guidance of a competent guru he is on dangerous ground.

One reason why a competent guru who can guide the aspirants on this path is not easily found is, of course, that the aspirant often lacks the necessary qualifications. For, as pointed out above, only mature and highly evolved souls can tread the Mountain Path and take this short cut to Self-realization. Less evolved souls have first to learn the elementary lessons by easier and safer methods. When they are ready for the methods of rapid development the needed guru will appear. For it is a law of spiritual life that when the disciple is ready the guru appears.

What has been said above also shows the futility of making a detailed study of the literature dealing with tantric practices. Since such literature deals with the hidden side of man's constitution and generally uses symbolical language, it can be understood only by those who possess the keys to the hidden mysteries or who are in conscious touch with the realities of the subtler planes. Those who try to acquire extensive and

detailed theoretical knowledge without having any practical contact with the inner planes are like a student trying to master some branch of physical science without ever entering a laboratory or coming into practical touch with the facts the science deals with. His knowledge may be encyclopaedic but it will be unrealistic and his mind is likely to be confused with undigested ideas and purely theoretical details. In the study of any practical science it is necessary for at least a part of the knowledge to be based on direct contact with the facts the science deals with. Without this it is impossible to make proper use of the theoretical knowledge we may have amassed. If this is true even of facts that can be observed through the sense organs and comprehended by the concrete mind it is easy to see how much more it applies to facts of the superphysical bodies with which tantra deals. And yet there are people who spend their lives amassing extensive and detailed information about these things without any relation to the facts of actual experience.

There are two other complicating factors in the study of tantric literature dealing with practical problems of self-culture. One is that blinds have been put up at every step to prevent people foolish enough to dabble in these things without proper guidance and know-how from injuring themselves and others. This explains why a person may follow the instructions laid down in a book for attaining a certain end in exact detail without getting any result. He simply does not possess the key to unlock the secret that is hidden behind the deceptive formula. Despite this safeguard, however, it is not safe to practise these things on the basis of purely theoretical knowledge, for even though one will not obtain the desired result there is no certainty that one will not obtain undesirable results of the most serious nature by unknowingly arousing forces and powers about which one knows nothing and which one cannot control.

The other complicating factor in the practical application of directions and instructions given in tantric literature is the inter-

polation of a considerable amount of spurious matter. It is natural that a system of self-culture which provides easy methods of developing higher states of consciousness and powers of various kinds should attract the attention of people who aim at exploiting the unwary and ambitious. This has led to the gradual production of considerable spurious literature which has diluted and debased the corpus of true knowledge originally provided by competent teachers. The spurious literature is of two kinds. One part consists of scraps of theoretical knowledge filched from various sources, compiled and presented in an attractive manner. Many Hindus are inclined to believe anything written in Sanskrit and regard it with reverence, even though they have not the slightest idea what it means. This blind faith is exploited by unscrupulous writers to foist spurious occult literature on the credulous as genuinely spiritual. The other type of spurious occult literature is of a still more dangerous kind. It embodies genuine knowledge concerning the manipulation of forces connected with the lowest levels of man's nature. This, in its crudest form, is used as a means of gratifying the baser human tendencies and animal propensities, and in its higher but more dangerous forms it may be veiled and camouflaged black magic. It is the admixture of true practical tantric literature with this kind of counterfeit which has given it a bad name and which makes the average man suspicious of it and of everything connected with it. Since it is not always easy to distinguish between the true and the counterfeit tantric literature, it is perhaps well, human nature being what it is, that this prejudice does exist and keeps people away from dangerous fields of exploration.

Nevertheless there can be no doubt that tantric literature does contain not only some of the highest concepts of religion and philosophy but also techniques of practical spiritual training which, in the hands of those who possess the necessary keys and knowledge can open up the inner realms of the mind in a very effective manner.

A CHAKRA AT SRI RAMANASRAMAM

By KRISHNA BHIKSHU

In the sanctum sanctorum of the Matrubhuteswara Temple at Sri Ramanasramam, established by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, in a small niche in the western wall, stands an object of worship two feet square and proportionately high, cut out of a single piece of granite and resting on a base of gold plate on which is etched a particular symbolical geometric figure. This object has been worshipped ever since its installation by Sri Bhagavan in 1949, the year before he laid down the body. In technical terminology it is a Sri Chakra Meru standing on a *Sri Chakra Bhu-prasthara yantra*.

It may seem incongruous to some that Bhagavan who all his life taught the philosophy and path of Advaita or Identity should at the same time inaugurate this other mode of worship or sadhana which is to all appearance far removed from it. But since he did so it behoves us to try to understand why, and for that we must investigate the significance of the Sri Chakra Meru and Sri Chakra yantra and of the sadhana based on them. While doing so it is well to remember that they are a symbolism and a sadhana that go right back to Vedic times and are said to have been originally instituted by the Lord Himself.

The object of all sadhana taught and practised at Sri Ramanasramam is only to realize the ever-existing identity between the worshipper or individual self and the Worshipped or Supreme Self. Advaita itself is based on the Vedic text: *Sarvam khaluidam Brahma*, "All this is Brahman". To realize this is the purpose of any type of Advaitic *upāsana* or teaching. The teaching is succinctly set forth in another verse: *Isāvāsyam idam sarvam, yatkincha jagatyām jagat*, "Whatever lives and moves in this phenomenal world is to be clad in the luminosity of the Lord." To put it more simply, we have to realize as a result of sadhana (and not merely know theoretically) that

everything, visible and invisible, is a manifestation of the Supreme Brahman. This is technically termed *Brahma-ātma-aikya-siddhi*: realization that the Brahman or Supreme Self is the same as the atma or individual self.

The Supreme Being is called the *Brahmānda* or 'egg of Brahma' and the composite personality of the individual, the *pindānda* or 'egg of flesh'. The embryonic form of the individual self or the basic form out of which it is evolved is called the *andānda* or 'egg of life'. From the *pindānda* the successful sadhaka rises to the *Brahmānda* or limitless Beyond. Successful sadhana results in a blissful (*ananda*) conscious (*chinmaya*) existence (*sat*). In that state there are neither 'I' nor 'others', neither self nor phenomena, but only the all-embracing *Satchitananda*, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. However, even this, the texts say, is only the mode of Brahman called Saguna or 'Conditioned'. Beyond it is Nirguna Brahman or 'Conditionless Brahman' to which no words or attributes can reach.

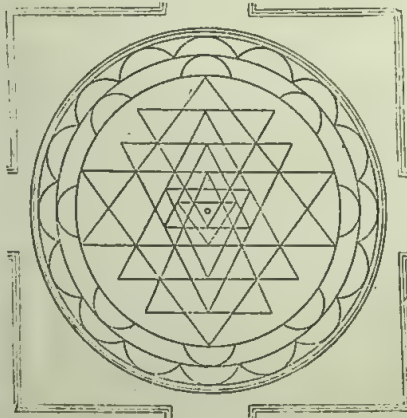
The Sri Chakra Meru type of sadhana instituted by Bhagavan at his Ashram aims at this same ultimate objective through concentration on a symbol called the Meru. The method is known as tantra or tantrism, being based on the ancient tantric texts. These are coeval with the Vedas. The sadhana based on them is worship of the power aspect of Brahman which is called Tripurasundari, the same as the Saguna Brahman we referred to above. Of course, it must not be supposed that Saguna Brahman is anything different from the ultimate Nirguna Brahman; it is only another aspect of it.

Tantric sadhana proceeds by worship of a form, or perhaps concentration on a form might be a more apt description. This is usually a geometrical figure called a *yantra* although, as will be explained later, it may also be an icon. The sadhana involves the utterance of *mantras* and the use of the

requisite *dravyas* or supports at the right moment and in the right manner. It can only be validly performed by one who has been initiated into it by a guru. The tantras declare that the *devata* or god worshipped, the *yantra* or symbol used, the *mantra* or words uttered and the *mantri* or worshipper are all one and the same; and therefore the purpose of this worship is to rise from the state of creature to the state of Creator.

Probing into the meaning of this mode of sadhana, we find that it is a method of concretising concepts in a material form and, by working through the material form, rising above it to the level of concept and then above even that to the finer and more subtle level of its Source. The material form through which one works may be a *prathika* or icon or a *prathima* or geometrical symbol. This last is known as a *yantra*. Tantrikas use both types. Both are described in detail in the *agamas* or tantric texts; and it is important that they should be exactly as laid down, because there is no fancy or imagination in the prescription but precise symbolism. The object of this article is not to describe this symbolism at length but to explain the basic concept underlying tantric worship.

How do we represent the entire cosmos with its phenomenal manifestations in a geometrical figure? Its causal or embryonic state, the *andānda* referred to above, is represented by a minute circle called the *bindhu*, round which the *yantra* is built. This point or minute circle represents the unevolved essence or germ of being, the virtual *Satchitananda* known in the individual as the *antaryāmi*. To counterbalance it the fully evolved and perfected manifestation or actualised perfection is represented by an infinitely large circle. This is the *Brahmānda*, and since it has no limitation the limits of manifestation are represented by squares within it.



Out of the *bindhu* or causal state of the individual, which is the causal body or *kārana sarīra* of the cosmos, are manifested *kāla* and *nāda*, light and sound, which appear on a formal plane as form and name. That is on the level of formal manifestation, but prior to that, on the causal plane, first arise desire and action, *ichcha* and *kriya*. These are the first two expressions of the Prime Power or Shakti. Thus the whole process of manifestation is dependent on and governed by the Shakti who is (1) *Chit* or Consciousness, (2) *Ichcha*, wish or desire, (3) *Kriya* or action. *Kriya* is the combined result of the first two and is represented as the apex of the triangle of which they form the base. Although one says 'base' and

'apex' the triangle is actually inverted, with its apex pointing downwards, since it represents the descent of the Divine into the manifested world. The sadhaka is represented by another triangle with its apex pointing upwards. The two triangles interpenetrate and in the heart of them is the *bindhu*. The *ichcha* of the individual leads him to action and from the two of

them combined arises consciousness, aspiring upwards. The descent of the Divine and the ascent of the aspirant are thus interlocked, and this is the simplest form of the *yantra* or symbol. Between the *bindhu* and the Beyond the power of the Maha Tripurasundari or Supreme Shakti has now built for herself a *pindānda* represented by the six-pointed star, and out of this emerge the microcosm or individual and the macrocosm or cosmos. This is also called the first *pura*, body or abode in which the Mulashakti or Original Shakti abides.

All the geometrical figures used in the chakra are variants of circles and triangles. A *bindhu* surrounded by a triangle in a circle can represent the entire creation; but all the manifestations of power have to figure in the completed *yantra*.

According to tantric teaching the Mula-shakti or Original Shakti manifests as three different shaktis at each node of the triangle. These are Sri Maha Saraswati, Sri Maha Shakti and Sri Maha Kali, the three primary forms of the Mother. They are the first deities to be worshipped by every manifestation of form and name in the universe. Each of them has various aspects which are manifested in the larger triangles. The powers of the Shakti are legion. Cosmically, each larger triangle represents a wider and grosser manifestation. The tantric texts give the names of the presiding deities at each of the nodes of each of these triangles. This diagram of manifestation is surrounded by two concentric circles, of which the inner represents the centrifugal forces and the outer the centripetal. The various types of force are represented by the petals of a lotus. Outside the circles there is still grosser manifestation represented by squares which surround the *pura* or abode of the Devi. Every type of matter, metal, tree and living creature, is given a place in these ramparts. The deities which preside over each rampart are mentioned and have to be worshipped by the aspirant. It is said that the Sri Puri or place in which the Mother manifests herself is surrounded by twenty-five ramparts of different materials and that beyond these is the unmanifest power of the Shakti.

For the individual the order is reversed. What is in seed form in the first upright triangle has to be expanded by sadhana into the larger triangles which represent wider powers latent in him. Ultimately he has to overleap the ramparts and merge in the all-pervading Unmanifest. I have purposely not given the details of the chakras mentioned in the texts, since Tantrism is a secret tradition not to be revealed in its operative details except to those who are initiated into it. It is enough to say that each figure represents some *tattwa* in the cosmic creation which is the second *pura* or abode of the Mother. And the Beyond, i.e. the *Brahmānda* of the cosmos, is the third *pura*.

Tantrism teaches that in worshipping the

deities at each point of the diagram one acquires their Grace and develops the power they represent. Thus, what begins as the mere worship of an outer form becomes a *samskāra* on the mental plane, and these *samskāras* can actualise powers in the individual which were hitherto merely virtual or potential. Finally they lead the individual back to the amplitude of power, consciousness and bliss which is the essential nature of the Divine Mother.

Tantriks believe in the manifestation of the Mother in form and name, which means that for them creation is a fact and not just an illusion, as it is for the pure Advaitin. The Advaitin works for the elimination of ignorance or illusion, whereas the tantrik works for the development of cosmic power and consciousness. The ultimate goal of both is the same, that is identity with Saguna Brahma and further eventual transition into the Nirguna beyond.¹

Tantrism teaches that there are a number of worlds on different planes, controlled by different powers of the Divine Mother. The ultimate result of sadhana is identification with the formless and nameless Power above them all that is Maha Tripurasundari, the Supreme Shakti.

Now to return to the specific case of Sri Ramanasramam. The *yantra* called *Sri Chakra Bhuprastāra* is etched on a gold plate and forms the base of the Meru worshipped there. To the normal Sri Chakra form thus etched Bhagavan added some *bija aksharās* of the mantra of Kumara or Subramanya.

The *Meru prasthara* is the Sri Chakra in conical form, its apex representing the highest point of realization attainable to the aspirant as a result of his sadhana. The mind becomes one-pointed and merges into the indescribable Beyond that is the Mother. Through this chakra the deities or *devās* are

¹ It is to be noted that these two viewpoints are not mere theories, after the style of Western philosophy, of which one must be false if the other is true. Rather each is the theoretical basis for a practical discipline or sadhana. They are in ultimate agreement not on the theoretical plane but because the sadhanas based on them lead ultimately to the same goal.—(EDITOR)

to be worshipped. It is taught that the universe is in three stages, the causal, subtle and gross. For the Tantrik all this has to be symbolised, whereas for the Advaitin it is not necessary. The ultimate result aimed at is the same for both.

That is why Sri Bhagavan, who prescribed Self-enquiry for those who could follow it, also instituted this type of temple worship for those who are helped by it. Thus the beneficent power which he brought on earth is induced into the Sri Chakra sanctified by his touch. Some of his devotees believe that when he felt that the time was approaching for him to give up the body he instituted this as a means of canalising and continuing the Grace he had brought to them. He inducted his Divine Power into the Sri Chakra and Meru Chakra so that those drawn to the more elaborate path might continue to receive his Grace even after the disappearance of his body as well as those who

practised Self-enquiry. He was present at the installation and took a great interest in the *pratishtāpana*, personally adding some details to the forms of the Chakra and supervising the entire construction of the temple. He inspected every stone of the temple carefully during its construction and told the workmen to eliminate every defect, and at every stage he was the final authority both on form and on the ritual to be adopted and the deities to be worshipped. It is through his Grace that the Matrubhuteswara Temple is now *Rishi-pratishtāpita*, radiating his Light, which is the Light of the Mother. Its very name signifies that it is Ishwara (God) who has become the Mother, pointing to the identity between Ishwara and Mother or between Siva and Shakti. Thus the advaitic doctrine of identity is not negated by this act of Bhagavan's but on the contrary reinforced so as to be available for those who require a more ritualistic path.

As a fitting conclusion to this article we add a note on the installation of the Sri Chakra left by Alan Chadwick (for whom see the 'Ashram Bulletin' of our issue of January 1964). (Editor)

Bhagavan took a personal interest in the cutting of the Sri Chakra Meru of granite which was installed in the temple and is regularly worshipped. At the time of the *Kumbābishekam* or consecration, on the penultimate night before the holy water was poured over the images, he personally supervised the installation in the inner shrine. It was an extremely hot night, with the charcoal retorts melting the cement inside to further add to the heat and it must have been intolerable inside but he sat there for about an hour and a half telling them what to do.

On the last night before the final day he went in procession, opening the doors of the new hall and temple, and passed through into the inner shrine where he stood for some five or ten minutes with both hands placed on the Sri Chakra in blessing. I happened that night to be at his side the whole time. This was unusual as I usually avoided taking a prominent part in such things but liked to watch them from a distance. How-

ever something made me stay by him and on account of that I am able to testify to his deep interest in the temple and especially in the Sri Chakra. It was because of this knowledge that I was instrumental after Bhagavan's passing in persuading the Ashram authorities to start the Sri Chakra Pujas six times a month. The explanation of this unusual show of interest by Bhagavan is probably to be found in the necessity for the Shakti always to accompany Siva. It is not enough to have Siva alone. On the only occasion when such a puja was performed in Bhagavan's life-time he refused to go to his evening meal at the usual time but insisted on staying to watch it to the very end. When some one² remarked how magnificent it had been and what a good thing it would be if such pujas could be performed regularly, Bhagavan replied: "Yes, but who will see to this?" As I have already said, it is now being done and undoubtedly has the blessings of Bhagavan.

² Actually it was Alan Chadwick himself who said this and who undertook to see to it.—(EDITOR)

KAVYAKANTA GANAPATHI MUNI

A Tantric Devotee of Bhagavan

By VISVANATHAN

I had my first darshan of Bhagavan Sri Ramana in January 1921 at Skandashram, his cave-ashram on the eastern slope of Arunchala, before the present Ashram was built. He was then forty-one and I seventeen. Apart from five or six inmates of the Ashram, including Bhagavan's mother and younger brother¹, there were Sivaprakasam Pillai² and a few other earnest devotees who had come for a short stay. The moment I set eyes on Bhagavan I immediately, through his Grace, sensed his freedom from the apparent individuality. Overwhelmed by his subtle Grace, I stayed on in that rare atmosphere of purity and peace for five or six days. As instructed by him, I made a copy of Sri Ramana Gita³ from an Ashram note-book. This was significant, as it was by a deep study of this little book in his immediate presence that I, two years later, grasped the essence of his teaching and method. I felt the tenderness of a mother in him. As I took leave of him he gave me that look of Grace that bound me to his feet for ever.

Two years later, on the evening of January 2nd., I returned to Bhagavan, this time with the intention of staying with him for good. I did not need to say so; he gave me an indication that he knew it. Since my first visit his mother had attained Mahasamadhi, and in December 1922, about a fortnight before my second visit, Bhagavan had come to stay beside her shrine at what



was to become Sri Ramanasramam. It so happened that I arrived on the eve of his birthday, which then used to be celebrated on a small scale. He accepted my surrender and gave me some directions to follow.

Next morning there was a gathering of devotees in his presence, one of whom attracted me and held my attention like a magnet. On enquiry I found that he was Kavyakanta Ganapathi Sastri, known to many as 'Ganapathi Muni', that is 'Ganapathi the Sage', the famous Sanskrit poet and scholar-disciple of Bhagavan. It was a thrilling experience, as he impressed me as a man of dynamic energy, with the air of a Rishi and at the same time great gentleness. His broad forehead, aquiline nose, shining

¹ The future Sarvadhikari, for whom see our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964.

² For whom see *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne, pp. 85-90, Rider & Co., London.

³ A redaction in Sanskrit verse by Ganapathi Muni of questions put by himself and other devotees and of Bhagavan's answers. It consists of 300 verses arranged in 18 chapters. An English translation also is available from the Ashram.

eyes, melodious voice and gently rippling laughter spoke of a spontaneously benevolent, powerful and highly intelligent personality. The audience listened with rapt attention as he read out a Sanskrit poem he had composed in praise of Bhagavan and explained its import. The poem praised Bhagavan as the embodiment of the Mother of the Universe, the Tapas of Brahman, manifesting Herself as the three Shaktis, Uma, Lakshmi and Sarasvati. Ganapathi Muni returned that afternoon to his abode in the Mango-tree Cave on Arunachala, half-way down from Skandashram.

A few days later I expressed to Bhagavan my wish to go through the main Upanishads, a study of which I had begun even before going to him. He directed me to Nayana⁴, saying that I could find no better teacher to help me. Next day I went to Nayana's cave on the hill in the afternoon. He came out to greet me. There was a spiritual atmosphere about him and his abode. He welcomed me with a cordial smile. As he sat down I had the impression of inner poise. After some preliminary talk I asked him to explain a passage in the Taittiriya Upanishad about the experience of the Sage Trisanku. He gave me such a lucid interpretation of the text that I began to revere him as a sage and resolved just to sit at his feet in future and listen to whatever he himself chose to say.

This great poet, who reminded me of an ancient Rishi, was born in 1878 in a village of Andhra, in the Vizagapatnam district and commanded the respect of elders even from his boyhood. He was a remarkable and versatile genius who devoted his whole life to tapas with the object of awakening India from her long slumber so that she might recapture her inherent glory. Though married early, he wandered all over India, engaging in austerities in various sacred places. In his twenty-second year the title 'Kavyakanta'⁵ was bestowed on him by an assembly of veteran scholars of the Sanskrit

University of Navadvipa in Bengal in appreciation of his talent for poetical extemporisation.

In 1907 he heard of the youthful Sage on Arunachala, known then as 'Brahmana Swami'. "In the heat of the afternoon sun he climbed the hill to Virupaksha Cave. The Swami was sitting alone on the veranda of the cave. Sastri fell on his face before him and clasped his feet with outstretched hands. In a voice quivering with emotion, he said: "All that has to be read I have read; even Vedanta Sastra I have fully understood; I have performed japa (invocation) to my heart's content; yet have I not up to this time understood what tapas is. Therefore I have sought refuge at your feet. Pray enlighten me as to the nature of tapas."

"The Swami turned his silent gaze on him for some fifteen minutes and then replied: 'If one watches whence the notion 'I' arises the mind is absorbed into That; that is tapas. When a mantra is repeated, if one watches the Source from which the mantra sound is produced the mind is absorbed in That; that is tapas.'

"It was not so much the words spoken that filled him with joy as the Grace radiating from the Swami. With the exuberant vitality that he put into everything, he wrote to friends of the upadesa he had received and began composing praises of the Swami in Sanskrit verse. He learned from Palani-swami⁶ that the Swami's name had been Venkataramana and declared that henceforth he must be known as Bhagavan Sri Ramana and as the Maharshi."⁷

He continued his sadhana under Bhagavan's guidance, composing the while hymns to the Divine Mother, whom he now saw manifest in his Guru. His Kundalini was awakened and he had a remarkable experience which helped him in his effort to attain inherence in the Self. He was convinced that even for fulfilment of his original aim of national regeneration inherence in the Self

⁴ A Telugu word meaning literally 'Father'. Ganapathi Muni's followers addressed him so and Bhagavan also did.

⁵ Meaning 'whose speech is poetry'.

⁶ Bhagavan's attendant.

⁷ Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge, p. 97. Rider & Co., London.

was necessary, in order to be able to function as an instrument of the Divine, uncontaminated by the ego.

Having been with Bhagavan and Nayana for many years, I can testify to the great regard and affection shown by Bhagavan for this esteemed disciple. It was at his request that Bhagavan wrote his wonderful Sanskrit hymn of 'Five Verses to Arunachala', elucidating the significance of Arunachala and the paths of karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana.⁸ Nayana wrote a brief Sanskrit commentary on Bhagavan's *Upadesa Sara* ('Essence of Instruction') and rendered his 'Forty Verses on Reality' into Sanskrit verse. Whenever any one asked Bhagavan about *mantra* and *upāsana* he would send them to Nayana, and Nayana used to direct those interested in Self-enquiry and Vedanta to Bhagavan.

The significance of Nayana's place in the scheme of Bhagavan will be clear if we understand that the ancient tradition of India recognized as valid the Tantric path of the awakening of Kundalini, culminating in true experience of the Self. Sri Ramakrishna and many others reached the goal by this path. Sri Shankara, the supreme Advaitin, dealt with it in his Tantric works.

The emphasis of Nayana as well as Bhagavan was on direct experience of Reality. He used to say that one should catch fire and blaze and that to do so was real spirituality. This is just what Bhagavan says at the end of his *Upadesa Sara*: "The spontaneous effulgence of the Self, devoid of the ego, is the greatest tapas." Nayana also insisted on

the eradication of the ego, as may be seen from his prayer to the Mother: "May the omnipotent Mother hovering over this insignificant mortal, annihilate my base ego, and shine forth, pervading and transcending my whole being." Apart from three magnificent poems in praise of the Mother, comprising two thousand brilliant verses, he composed many other Sanskrit works clarifying all the phases of traditional teaching from the Rig-Veda downwards.

Ganapathi Muni passed away at Karaghpur in July 1936, at the age of fifty-eight. Bhagavan held the telegram bringing the sad news in his hand until the evening chanting of the Vedas was finished. Only then did he say with evident emotion: "This is a shock: Nayana has passed away!" After a short pause he added: "Has he?" indicating that he had not. With tears in his eyes he exclaimed: "Where can we find the like of him?"

Bhagavan kept with him in the meditation hall the Sanskrit letters written to him by Nayana. Soon afterwards he arranged the occasional stray verses to the Master composed by Nayana, giving them the title 'Forty Verses in Praise of Ramana'; and they were regularly chanted in his presence together with the Vedas every morning.

Many of the devotees of Bhagavan remember with love and reverence this outstanding disciple who was a rare poet, who spent his whole life in tapas and who gladly helped all who approached him, radiating joy and cheerfulness and uplifting all who came in contact with him. May we emulate his self-surrender and devotion, praised by Bhagavan himself on several occasions.

⁸ See *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, published by Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

RECIPE FOR TRANQUILLITY

By L. P. YANDELL

Once one is able to leave oneself out of consideration there results in one's life a kind of glad willingness to do what needs doing and to help where help is needed and a cheerful enduringness and patience which are of themselves a great reward. For with oneself no longer considered central it's remarkable how little there is left to fret about.



LOVED ARUNACHALA

Translated by 'SEIN'
from the Tamil of Om Sadhu*

Loved Arunachala, serene You stand!
Unmoved as You, grant me to merge in You.
Majestic Hill, You draw me close and bid
Stand with stilled mind, as without thought You stand.

Yearning, my gaze is fixed on You alone,
As magnet-like You draw the heart of me,
You who enthrall, who give Your vassals peace,
Rousing desire to be without desire.

As the moth circles the flame,
Persistent to its doom,
Let me go round, go round Arunachala,
Till Your Grace my mind consume.

Let me be a prey to You, Arunachala!
So shall my griefs dissolve with my desires:
Arunachala, the final Home of all,
Enslaved by You, what more remains to seek?

Loved Arunachala, serene You stand!
Unmoved as You, grant me to merge in You.

*For a note on whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of July, 1964, p. 189.

ARUNACHALA AS MANDALA

By MADGUNI SHAMBHU BHAT

"Go round the mountain ; that is what the Maharshi used to recommend," said an Ashram friend to whom I mentioned my intention of climbing to the summit. I felt a thrill as he said it and immediately knew that he was right. The whole day I had a feeling of a presence watching over me. I kept falling into prayer, and whenever I closed my eyes in meditation I beheld the face and gracious eyes of Maharshi Ramana.

I was overjoyed at having come to Sri Ramanasramam again, even though I had waited so long. It was 28 May, 1964, and my initial visit had taken place sixteen years earlier, almost to the day, on 31 May, 1948. I had been blessed by the Sage in a dream at Dhari in Saurashtra, Gujerat, in 1943, and that had determined me to come. How can I describe my feelings when I at last met him face to face ? I stepped back with a gasp of wonder and respect and then prostrated before him. I was only able to stay at the Ashram for a day, but the potent spiritual impulse I received from him continued to grow in me and still does.

So on the morning of 29 May, 1964, I set out on *pradakshina*, walking barefoot round the hill. It was a pleasant morning with a cool wind and cloudy sky. The road was in a good state, part of the way tarred, but with a sandy strip to walk on at the side, part of the way metalled. As I set out from the Ashram I started chanting a Sanskrit mantra which had been revealed to me the night before, running :

I constantly bow down to that Queen of the Red Mountain who always bestows happiness.

I was walking alone, enjoying the loneliness of the prospect, when a villager overtook me and accompanied me for about a mile, talking about personal matters from

time to time. He left, after directing me to take the branch of the road that curved round the hill, not the broader bus road that ran straight on. When I returned to my chanting the *mantra* had changed. It now ran :

I bow down to that Queen of the universe, the Spouse of Lord Siva and Empress of the Red Mountain.

I was elated and my effort to return to the original mantra was unsuccessful. I felt myself borne along like a wave on the ocean.

I reached the village of Adiannamalai¹. I had known nothing about the large temple that stands there with its back to the road. I felt drawn to it and had darshan all by myself of Lord Annamalai² and His Spouse Ambika.³ As I was leaving the priest in charge invited me back in and I stayed while he made puja.

After resuming my *pradakshina* I became aware with a shock of surprise that the *mantra* had again changed, and this time from the feminine to the masculine. It now ran :

I bow down to that Lord of the universe, who liberates from re-birth and as the Lord of the Red Mountain.

Enfolded in bliss, I continued to chant this new version the whole of the rest of the way until I arrived at the great temple of Tiruvannamalai, where I prostrated before the Lord and His Spouse. Puja was just being performed when I arrived. I took *prasādam* and walked back the remaining mile or so wrapped in devotion, arriving

¹ Meaning 'ancient Annamalai'.

² Another name for 'Arunachala' and therefore for 'Siva'.

³ The spouse of Siva, known also as Uma, Parvati, Unnamulai and Durga.

back at 11 o'clock to the kindly hospitality of the Ashram.

After resting and taking lunch I began to reflect on my *pradakshina*. I had heard that Arunachala is the Ardhanareshwara Lingam itself. Was that why I had been unwittingly led to chant the feminine form of the mantra on the western side of the hill and the masculine form on the eastern side, that is from Adiannamalai back to Tiruvannamalai? In order to check on this I sought for a ground map of the hill, which

I found at the temple, and it was a real revelation to me to find that the two temples of Tiruvannamalai and Adiannamalai lie at either end of an axis running through the peak of the hill on which the beacon is lit every year at Kārtikai, as the accompanying sketch will show. To the east of the line joining them the hill is Siva and to the west Ambika. I cannot express the love and blessings with which they both embraced me during my *pradakshina*. I bow down to them again and again.



(1) I constantly bow down to that Queen of the Red Mountain who always bestows happiness.

(2) I bow down to that Queen of the universe, the Spouse of Lord Siva and Empress of the Red Mountain.

(3) I bow down to that Lord of the universe, who liberates from rebirth and as the Lord of the Red Mountain.

..... Arunachala Hill.

— Giripradakshina Road.

SIVA-LINGAM

By T. K. S.¹

Siva-Lingam must not be taken to mean Siva's lingam, for Siva is Himself the Lingam. Lingam means 'indicator', as smoke is an indicator of fire. By Siva everything is brought to consciousness and thus indicated, but nothing can indicate Siva. By His Self-revealing Consciousness He animates all manifestation. Matter needs to be animated by Spirit, but Spirit only by Itself.

If Siva were not pure Consciousness how could He be Siva? And if He were non-existent the whole universe which manifests Him would be non-existent. There would be mere nescience.

The existence of nescience cannot be established by nescience. It is Siva, as pure Consciousness and Witness of manifestation who reminds us of manifestation; but the Siva who reminds us is not Himself reminded.

This Maheswara² is Pure Light. So declare the scriptures. Through His Light the universe is perceived. Therefore Siva is Himself the Lingam, the indicator. For enlightened souls this Siva-Lingam is indeed worthy of worship.

It is He who gives life and light to all, though when seen as Arunachala Hill He appears to be dull and inert through the power of His Maya. The indiscriminating do not perceive the Light of Siva in Siva-Lingam.

Some say that the *Mahāvākya* (the supreme scriptural texts such as 'That thou art') are the lingam or indicator of Siva; others that Maya, the property of Siva, is; others again that intellect or ego-sense is; others say the life-force or sound or existence. But the great sages declare with absolute knowledge that since Siva is Self-effulgent there is nothing to indicate Him.

Knowledge alone is the indicator. Mahes-

wara, abiding in all bodily vehicles, is witnessing or recollecting Himself.

Some say that *ālaya*, the substratum and support of all, is the indicator, but Siva Himself is the support of all. He alone is Truth or Reality. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Consciousness is Being; unconsciousness can never be Being. For Him who is the support of all there can be no support. He is unsupported like the ether (*ākāsha*).

For beings in *samsāra* (which is the same as *ajñāna*, ignorance) a support is provided commensurate with the ripeness of their intellect, for worship of the Unsupported Supreme.

Some knowers of the Vedas say that everything is absorbed in the Lingam (from *ligi*, 'to be absorbed'), but even so Maheswara, the Almighty, is that Self-evident Lingam and is not absorbed. This whole universe, whose nature it is to be absorbed, is absorbed in Brahman, but Brahman is never absorbed.

Just as the illusion of silver in mother-of-pearl loses its apparant reality through knowledge (that it is not silver), so through knowledge all that appears to be extraneous to the Supreme Lord Siva, who is Brahman, is absorbed in Him.

Those who practise kundalini-yoga find the lingams in the *nādis* or yogic centres in the body and make these the seats for the worship of Siva.

The submergence of the thought-current in the unruffled calm of Paramatma is said to be the essential worship. Mere worship through mantras is not enough to destroy once and for all the tree of *samsara*, whose root is nescience. Knowledge (Jnana) alone is the true invocation of Siva. Formal puja (worship) is of the gross state; the Vedas are the means to Realization; but Jnana is the Supreme State. It is inner worship and must be carried on unremittingly to terminate the cycle of births and deaths.

¹ The author unfortunately died shortly after writing this article. See the obituary published in this issue.—(Editor)

² *Maha-Ishvara*, the Almighty, a name of Siva.

BINDU IN SAIVAGAMA

A Philosophical Concept

By DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA.

The Āgamas are a class of scriptures which are primarily sadhana-sastras, that is manuals of spiritual technique, and only secondarily treatises on philosophy. These sastras attach great importance to the Divine power or Shakti of a Saguna Ishwara or Personal God. Just as physical science speaks of energy as the stuff of the world, in the same manner the āgamas speak of Shakti or Divine Power as the ultimate material cause of the world, It is the object of the āgamic sadhana to unite the individual self with the universal self by awakening in the individual's psycho-physical organism the various latent forces of Divine Power. The Divine or Mother element resides in the mind-body system of the jiva or individual in the form of kundalini-shakti (power in a sleeping or coiled state) and in and through āgamic sadhana, this kundalini power is awakened by piercing the six chakras.

The Āgamas are divided into three main groups :

1. Shākta Āgama or Shākta Tantra
2. Saiva Āgama
3. Vaishnava Āgama or Pancharātra.

In this article I would like to give a general idea about Bindu in Saiva-āgama and also to show how this concept can be treated as a philosophical concept having a close relation with the path of knowledge.

There are certain fundamental categories which are admitted in the Saiva-āgama. These are: Siva, Shakti, Pasu, Pāsa, Bindu etc.

Siva is pure Consciousness which is immutable, eternal and absolute. He is the Highest Reality and the final goal of the jiva. He is also the sole support of Shakti and Bindu. Siva and Shakti, being of the form of Chit, (Consciousness) inhere in

one another. Siva is inclusive of Shakti. The connection between them is inseparable. Siva, devoid of Shakti, is as good as a non-entity.

This Siva-Shakti or Divine Power manifests itself sometimes in the form of will, sometimes in the form of knowledge and sometimes in the form of action. Bindu seems to be that aspect of Chit-Shakti in which the Divine Power actually particularises (*krya*) and also manifests itself as knowledge (*jnana*) of particular objects: because it is from bindu that words which are the basis of *vikalpa-jnana* (particularised knowledge) arise in a graduated order.

In the sphere of activity there is no direct contact between Siva and Bindu. There is an indirect relation between the two through the mediation of Shakti. When Shakti assumes the form of the creative will, its conative aspect is roused and causes a disturbance in Bindu which results in creation. Siva has been described as *vispasta chin-mātra* (unmanifest Consciousness) because He never actively participates in creation. He vitalises Bindu through His Shakti, and so Siva remains immutable and unchanging in nature.

When Shakti seeks to manifest the *aisvarya* (glories) of her Lord through the diversities of different worlds, she assumes the form of Divine Resolution and causes disturbance in Bindu. Since Siva remains in *avinābhāva* (inseparable) relation with Shakti, He too has been regarded as the cause of disturbance in Bindu. Just as the sun makes flowers bloom by means of its rays and does not undergo any change in its nature on that account, so Siva also causes disturbance in Bindu through His Will alone without performing any actual creative act.

When *Paramesvara* (the Almighty) Himself causes disturbance in Bindu through His *samkalpa-shakti* (power of will), *panchatattvas* (the five categories) of Siva, Shakti, Sadāsiva, Ishwara and Suddha-vidya come into being. Māyā is not directly disturbed by the Almighty. According to the agamic view Māyā is not illusory. It is substantive in nature and is the *upādāna kāraṇa* (material cause) of the world. Bindu is also known as kundalini. Kundalini manifests the soul's natural power of all-embracing knowledge and action. In the bound condition when the soul remains associated with *mala* (impurity) its natural capacity of infinite knowledge and action remains in a dormant or sleeping state. If this power can be awakened in the *mulādhāra*, the lowest of the *chakras* and can be made to rise up to *sahasrara* or the lotus in the crown of the head by piercing the other four *chakras*, then the soul becomes pure and is in a position to enter into the highest luminous world. Yogic discipline or knowledge may destroy karma and maya. *Mala*, which is the most powerful enveloping force, can be destroyed only by the awakening of this power of *jñāna* and *krya*. Kundalini sadhana is, therefore, the most important sadhana for the tantric worshipper and, for this reason, initiation into it is absolutely necessary.

It is true that the concept of kundalini is specially associated with *guhya vidya* (secret doctrines) like tantra, hatha yoga etc. : yet on the basis of rational consideration, we can accord a suitable philosophical status to it. In fact, āgamika sadhana is intimately related with the processes of yoga-sadhana : both believe that mind, like body, requires continuous exercise and training so as to develop all its powers and potencies. Man is a vast storehouse of poten-

tial and expressed power. The object of sadhana is to develop all powers of the human body and mind. The hatha yogī aims at making his body strong, healthy and free from suffering : for this purpose he makes a sincere attempt to arouse the kundalini in him. According to hatha yoga, kundalini is *amrtavarshini* (nectar-showering) and the nectar that drips from kundalini makes the body strong as steel and immortal. Here we may say that, according to this school of yoga, kundalini seems to be an organ of the mind-body system. Since psychic powers, being pure in nature, are more illuminating and pleasure-giving than physical powers, kundalini, which increases knowledge and showers blissful nectar, may be a special state of *antahkarana* or the psychical apparatus. It may be a state in which *sattva* becomes wholly purified and *rajas* and *tamas* become fully subdued.

Rāmanuja has stated that the lotus of the heart is the seat of the atomic soul. If this be so, then the purpose of sadhana is to make the lotus bloom, as otherwise the true nature of the soul will not be realised. The lotus of the heart is here regarded as kundalini and thus kundalini sadhana is harmonised with the philosophical position of the Rāmanuja school. Hence the concept of kundalini is not to be found only in the mystic religion of Tantra or esoteric doctrine of yoga, but is also accepted in other philosophical systems. Dhyana Yoga in the Vaishnavite system and kundalini yoga in tantra, hatha yoga etc. are not therefore two entirely different lines of sadhana, since both combine intellectual processes with the process of rousing kundalini shakti. This is not to deny, of course, that there are variations in the interpretations of kundalini according to whether the systems concerned are advaitic or dualistic.

"The world has been trying to solve its problem with a mind that is the problem". What says that? The self-same mind!

—"WEI WU WEI".

THE SUFI SCIENCE OF LATAIF

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

Being the spiritual aspect of Islam, Sufism is the science of man's spiritual development. Like every science, whether spiritual or physical, it has a theoretical and a practical side, its theory being the basis for practical experiment and the success of its experiments being the proof of its theory. It offers various modes of spiritual training, one of which bears a striking resemblance to the Tantric path of Kundalini. This is not really surprising; indeed it is almost inevitable since the subtle centres that are activated by these methods are neither invented nor imagined but simply recognized, being realities. They are not physical organs and none of their exponents suppose that they are; they are centres of the subtle potentialities latent in man but undeveloped in most men.

In Tantrism they are called 'chakras' or wheels. The Sufi term for them, 'lataif' (singular *latifa*) is much harder to define. Al-Latif is one of the 99 Divine Names and bears the implication 'The Subtle' or 'The Discriminating'. It is also the Name most commonly invoked when praying for something, which indicates that it bears the implication 'The Discriminating Giver'. The *lataif*, therefore, might be termed 'subtle centres' or centres of subtle perception or of discriminate fruition.

According to Sufi teaching there are seven *lataif*. One of them is in the region of the solar plexus. One, known as *qalb* or heart, is in the place of the physical heart. Opposite it, at the right side of the chest, is the one known as *Ruh* or Spirit. A third is between these two. As with the *chakras*, there is one in the forehead and one (corresponding to the Hindu *sahasrara*) in the crown of the head. Activation of this last may seem to be the supreme achievement, but there are Sufis who hold that it is really

dependent on the *Ruh* at the right side of the chest. It is noteworthy that the Mahārshi taught the same from the Hindu context and that Lama Govinda also asserts it from the Buddhist context in his 'Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism'. That in the crown of the head is more concerned with ecstatic experience, but the *Ruh* is the pure spiritual Being on which this is based.

The activation of a *latifa* is known as its *tajalli*, that is its illumination or irradiation. This is accomplished by a precise technique under the guidance of one who has himself achieved it and is qualified to guide others. The method will involve concentration on the *latifa* to be irradiated together with other exercises such as a specific type of breath-control and certain specified incantations. It is a precise science, unguided or misguided experimentation in which may achieve nothing or even have destructive results, just as in a physical science. In fact there is real danger of the mind being overbalanced or the character ruined. Not only is right guidance essential but right motives as well. If such experimentation is practised out of curiosity or the desire for powers it may injure the practitioner despite sound guidance and will certainly not bring him to the goal — or at any rate not unless his motives change in the course of the quest.

Higher powers are in fact attained, for the activation of each *latifa* brings about a certain more or less specific heightening of understanding and perceptions. These may include ecstatic visions and experiences, telepathic powers, ability to foresee the future and so forth; all these, however, are regarded by the true Sufi as by-products. The *salik* or traveller who values them for themselves is likely to get stuck in them and proceed no further. Many occultists or magi-

cians, people who have supernatural powers but no real spirituality, are experimenters who have failed in this way, clinging to the partial results attained and therefore unable to co-ordinate and transcend them. Nor is the danger to be ignored that such failures

may fail still further by falling into the grip of dark forces and becoming black magicians. The true goal to be aimed at is the state of 'Perfect Man', *Insanul Kamil*, and for this purity, patience and persistence are necessary as well as right guidance.

AN EXPERIENCE OF KUNDALINI

By UNNAMULAI

I was in the midst of packing to return to Tiruvannamalai after spending the hottest months in the hills. My children couldn't stand the heat of the plains. The house which had been found for me was right out of town, facing a magnificent mountain and had not been inhabited for some years, so it was barely furnished. I had had to bring even kitchen utensils, so it can be imagined what packing there was. It was a terrific rush and with very little help.

It was in the thick of this that it happened. A sort of lassitude came over me, but a most pleasant lassitude. From the base of my spine a tingling feeling arose as if a thousand ants were climbing up. I must have fever, I thought; but a most delightful fever, so let it be. All thought of packing or going or any urgent work just vanished. I simply rested, whether sitting or lying down I don't remember. The ascent continued, stopping at various points along my spine. I particularly remember at the base of my neck. Then it burst through the crown of my head with the blaze of a million suns — the splendour of it! Ecstasy which no words could describe! There was nothing to be perceived — nothing now to describe. Only this unimaginable feeling of indescribably blissful well being. There was nobody else. There was nothing else. So that's it!

How long it lasted — a second, an eternity — I cannot tell. Then I returned to nor-

mal body-consciousness and the world emerged again — but how drab! It was like being thrust back into a cage, in spite of the after-glow of the experience.

At that time I knew nothing of Kundalini and I have never practised it.

On my return to Tiruvannamalai I came across Sir John Woodroffe's 'The Serpent Power' and there read about the chakras and verified my experience. I did not mention it to Sri Maharshi until some time later when I was asked to go through Heinrich Zimmer's German work *Der Weg Zum Selbst* in which he speaks about Kundalini from a theoretical standpoint. In this connection I told Sri Maharshi that my experience was different and wrote out an account of it. He perused this very attentively and did not return it to me but gave it to the attendant to file.

Some years later I heard a certain Swami tell his disciples that when Kundalini bursts through the sahasrara in the crown of the head the person is realized. I did not want to raise this question in front of everybody, so I spoke with him privately about it later, when I begged to differ. I told him about my experience and said that it was only sporadic and not a permanent change of state. He asked me about it in great detail and was surprised but obviously convinced because he said: "You are moving in Grace; just persevere."

TAOIST ALCHEMY

By LU K'UAN YU (CHARLES LUK)

The Elixir of Life can be sublimated in the human body by the Taoist method of self-purification. In my book *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*,¹ I devoted a whole chapter to 'Taoist meditation for beginners without mentioning the method of preparing the Elixir of Life in order to avoid unnecessary controversy, for my aim was to present the Buddha-Dharma for students in the West.

Taoist meditation as described in my book is good for those who wish to get rid of ailments or to enjoy good health in their old age, and for those who want to prolong the span of life so that they have sufficient time to practise the Dharma which was well-nigh impossible when they were young and married with children to look after. For married and family men can devote all their time to practising the Supreme Vehicle only after their children have grown up and become independent. For instance, upasaka P'ang Yun, who was a family man, only realized Bodhi when he was old and after he had forsaken worldly attachments by dumping all his gold and silver into the Hsiang river²

The practice of Taoism is also not easy for it has its rules of morality and discipline, and all Taoists abstain from meat, sexual intercourse, killing, stealing and lying, if by Taoists one understands serious practisers of the doctrine of the Tao, and not worldly men who call themselves Taoists but do not keep its rules.

Their method of meditation consists in sitting cross-legged to regulate the body and concentrating their minds on the spot in the lower abdomen called *Lower Tan T'ien* or *Field of Elixir* which is about one and a half

inches below the navel, and is regarded as the center of gravity in the body. There are three places in the body called Tan T'ien: the *Upper Tan T'ien* between the eyebrows; the *Middle Tan T'ien* between the pit of the stomach and the navel; and the *Lower Tan T'ien* in the lower abdomen. All three play important roles in self-purification: the lower to energize the inner heat; the middle to set in motion the process of sublimating this heat; and the upper to transmute it into Divinity. Constant mental concentration on the Lower Tan T'ien will, in time, enable the breath to reach the lower abdomen and to energize the inner heat like blowing a fire with a pair of bellows. When the inner heat becomes intense and enough has accumulated in the center of gravity, it vibrates and seeks an outlet. At this moment pulmonary breathing ceases and is replaced by abdominal breathing which restores the foetal breath as described by Yin Shih Tsu in my book 'The Secrets of Chinese Meditation', p. 167.

The human body is a microcosm which should integrate into the macrocosm for the realization of Tao. In lay language, the Tao is only attained when body and mind merge with and integrate into the universe. To achieve this it is important to sublimate both body and mind for the purpose of obtaining the Elixir of Life which alone can transform mortals into immortals and so ensure this integration.

In my book on Chinese meditation, I have mentioned the Microcosmic Orbit technique used by the ancients in China, which consists in circulating the inner heat which has been energized, through the main orbit which begins at the Lower Field of Elixir below the navel, descends to the base of the spine, then rises along the spine to the top of the head, and thence descends along the face, throat,

¹ *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*. Rider & Co., London, 1964.

² Cf. *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, first series, pp. 74-78. Rider & Co., London.

chest and pit of the stomach to end up where it started, thus completing a full orbit.

In practice, when the energized heat which has accumulated in the lower abdomen seeks an outlet, the practiser should direct it gently down to the base of the spine to pierce the coccyx which is the first of the three gates of the main channel, the second between the kidneys and the third in the occiput. The feeling of intense heat in the coccyx shows that the latter is being pierced. However, if the heat remains there without going up the spine, this shows that the first gate is still obstructed. The practiser should rub with his hands the kidneys and spine down to its base to warm the spine above the coccyx in order to draw the heat up. Rubbing should always be downward, but never upward; this is the most important point which beginners should keep constantly in mind. After the inner heat has passed through the first gate, it will easily rise through the second to reach the occiput, which is very difficult to pierce. The practiser should persevere and will in time be able to circulate the inner heat through the last gate to complete a full orbit.

During each meditation the practiser will be able to circulate the inner heat in the main channel as many times as he likes. After the main channel has been cleared of all obstructions, the inner heat will enter other psychic channels and centers to sweep away all impurities therein in order to reach and purify all parts of the body including the marrow, bones, flesh, skin, nails and hair. This is purification of the body by means of the pre-natal foetal breath which is pure and cleanses all impurities created by the post-natal breath.

We present below a translation of extracts from Taoist texts so that readers have an idea of how the Elixir of Life is prepared.

"The generative fluid is produced by the digestion of food; if it is not purified it will remain in the body and arouse sexual desire which will disturb the mind. Concentration of mind is necessary to regulate the breath

for the purpose of energizing the inner fire which will sublimate the *generative fluid* and transform it into *pure breath* for the preparation of the Elixir of Life and attainment of *Immortality*."

"When the microcosmic orbiting succeeds, it will after a hundred days of continuous practice, stop involuntary emission when the generative fluid is about to be transmuted into pure breath. At the same time the inner fire should be extinguished. In the course of this transmutation, a flash of positive (yang) light will suddenly appear between the eyebrows to illumine the mind. However, the genital organ can still be aroused by sex appeal. After this manifestation of the positive principle, the microcosmic orbiting should be continued for three hundred orbits, after which the practiser should maintain the state of mental stillness in order to preserve the positive principle so far achieved until another flash of light appears.

"In this state of mental stillness, a second flash of positive light will suddenly appear between the eyebrows, illuminating the mind again. This shows that the inner fire is completely extinguished, coinciding with the end of three hundred orbitings. After this the genital organ cannot be aroused again.

"In this state of mental stillness, the body will no longer vibrate or move as the inner fire has been extinguished. The practiser should maintain this stillness to preserve the positive principle until a third flash of positive light appears between the eyebrows, which shows that the breath is wholly positive and is being accumulated in the three Tan T'iens.

"Now is the time to prepare the Elixir of Life which can be obtained in about a week. The method consists in turning back the organ of seeing to look into the Middle Tan T'ien in order to dwell in this stillness by day and night without interruption until the sovereign remedy is made.

"When the Elixir of Life is made, all sense organs vibrate; the positive heat in the Lower Tan T'ien is intense; the kidneys are hot; the eyes emit a golden light; the

ears (seem to be) fanned from behind; the back of the head rattles; and the body (seems to) rise with spasms in the nose. These six signs show that the Elixir of Life has been successfully prepared.

"Now the practiser should close his anus by sitting on a round piece of wood of the size and shape of a man t'ou³ and covered with cotton and his nostrils with a pair of small wooden pincers (used by laundry men) in anticipation of the rise of a fiery pearl to the heart which (however) does not hold it. To find an outlet, this fiery pearl will descend to the genital organ which has already shrunk and so is blocked; then to the coccyx which is not open; and then to the anus which is not only shut by the piece of wood but should also be contracted to bar its passage. Since the fiery pearl is now stationary at the base of the spine, the practiser should make a pointed concentration to move it and thrust it through the first gate so that it will rise along the spine through the second gate (between the kidneys) and the third gate (in the occiput) before ascending to the top of the head and thence descending to the forehead where it stops in the Upper Tan T'ien, the abode of the Spirit. When the latter illuminates the Middle and Lower Tan T'iens, all the three Fields of Elixir will mingle to expand and become a great emptiness.

"This is the moment when the mind enters the great emptiness wherein the positive fire ceases to work and is no more perceptible. Three months later, only feeble vibrations are still felt below the navel. In the fourth and fifth months, all breathing and the desire to eat cease completely, leaving behind only the still and radiant Spirit. In the sixth and seventh months, there is no desire to sleep. In the eighth and ninth months, all pulses in the body cease to beat. In the tenth month, there remains

only the positive principle while the Spirit returns to its state of utter stillness which causes wisdom to manifest.

"The time is now ripe to draw the Spirit out of the body; first return it to the body as soon as it is out of it, and then send it further and further away until it can reach distant places returning to its body without hindrance. Three years later, the Spirit which is still and shining will be no more Spirit when it sinks into the state of Wu Chi or Eternity."

This article is written at the request of Mr. Arthur Osborne, the editor of *The Mountain Path*. As a Buddhist, I would advise readers to adjust the Taoist method of self-purification with the Buddha's Teaching in the Surangama Sutra⁴ and other sutras in order not to stray from the Buddha-nature which is inherent in each of us. For Taoist Yoga only enables us to return to the all-embracing state of Alaya which still pertains to Samsara. However, experienced Taoists have no difficulty in practising the Buddha-Dharma and in China many enlightened Buddhist masters practised Taoism before joining the Sangha.

There is a non-Taoist method which consists in drawing up semen to the solar plexus to sublimate it and transform it into the divine. I have tried it and found it very harmful for it contributes to the arousal of sexual desire which beginners are unable to overcome. We should always remember that the rules of morality and discipline should be strictly observed in the practice of meditation, and that in the quest of Truth, we should on no account allow the monkey-mind to jump about aimlessly and so destroy all our efforts to get out of Samsara. We should never forget this sentence in the Diamond Sutra: "Subhuti, you should develop a mind that does not abide anywhere."

³ A round steamed dumpling of the size of the palm of the hand.

⁴ *The Surangama Sutra*. Rider & Co., London, 1965.

PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHIST TANTRISM

By LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA*

The word tantra is related to the concept of weaving and its derivatives (thread, web, fabric, etc.), hinting at the interwovenness of things and actions, the interdependence of all that exists, the continuity in the interaction of cause and effect as well as in spiritual and traditional development, which like a thread weaves its way through the fabric of history and of individual lives. The term tantra (Tib. *rgyud*), therefore, can also stand for tradition, spiritual continuity or succession. Those scriptures, however, which in Buddhism go by the title of 'Tantra', are invariably of a mystic nature and try to establish the inner relationship of things: the parallelism of microcosm and macrocosm, mind and universe, individuality and universality, ritual and reality, the world of matter and the world of the spirit. This is achieved through practices, in which yantra, mantra and mudra — the parallelism of the visible, the audible and the bodily expressible feeling-content in form of gestures — unite the powers of mind (*chitta*), speech (*vak*) and body (*kaya*), in order to realize the final state of completeness and enlightenment.

Thus, applying the words of Guru Gampopa, it may be said that the Buddhist Tantras represent "a philosophy comprehensible enough to embrace the whole of knowledge, a system of meditation which will produce the power of concentrating the mind upon anything whatsoever, and an art of living which will enable one to utilize each activity (of body, speech and mind) as an aid on the Path of Liberation."

Among all the aspects of Buddhism, its Tantric teachings have until now been the most neglected and misunderstood. The reason for this is the fact that these scriptures

cannot be understood merely philologically, but only from the point of view of yogic experience, which cannot be learned from books. Moreover, those books from which information was sought, were written in a peculiar idiom, a language of symbols and secret conventions, which in Sanskrit was called *Sandhyabhāṣa* (literally "twilight language") because of the double meaning which underlay its words.

This symbolic language was not only a protection against intellectual curiosity and misuse of yogic practices by the ignorant or the uninitiated, but had its origin mainly in the fact that the ordinary language is not able to express the highest experiences of the mind. The indescribable, which is experienced by the *sadhaka*, the true devotee, can only be hinted at by symbols, similes and paradoxes.

Already Nagarjuna (2nd century A.D.) made use of the paradox as an expression of the inexpressible nature of ultimate reality, when he declared that "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is not different from form — in fact, emptiness is form. — since all things possess the nature of emptiness, they have neither beginning nor end, they are neither perfect nor imperfect (i.e., they are neither self-sufficient nor yet entirely without individual significance in themselves)." — (*Prajnaparamita-Sutra*)

This ultimate reality, which is both 'form' and 'no-form' and which has been called *sunyata*, the Plenum-Void, in Nagarjuna's philosophy (*sunyavada*) is symbolized by the vajra, the indestructible diamond-sceptre, in the language of the Buddhist Tantras, which form the third "vehicle" (*yana*) of Buddhism: the Vajrayana. Each experience points beyond itself and can therefore not be confined or limited as something that exists in itself, but only

* For a note on whom see page 215 of our issue of October 1964.

in relationship to other experiences ; and this infinite relationship contains at the same time the unifying element of a living universe, because infinite relationship becomes all-relationship and therewith a metaphysical magnitude, in which samsara and nirvana are the two sides or aspects of the same reality.

While thus Nagarjuna created the theoretical or philosophical foundations of Tantrism, the *Yogacharins* provided the practical and psychological means for the realisation of this profound conception of a spiritual universe. In the application of yogic practices they united the most ancient sources of Indian wisdom and religious inspiration with the meditative experiences which had been developed under the Buddha's guidance and under the influence of his teachings. Thus the Tantras were born, and their impact upon the general religious life of India was so overwhelming that between the 6th and the 8th century Tantrism was introduced into the major schools of Hinduism. The most important Tantras of Shaivism originated in Kashmir, which had been a stronghold of Buddhism and of Buddhist Tantrism in particular. This explains the many similarities between Shaivaite and Buddhist Tantras and also the fact that Buddhists accepted Shiva in their pantheon as a Protector of the Dharma.¹

Western scholars, whose first knowledge of Tantrism came through Hindu literature (and that of a very late date, like the scriptures translated by Sir John Woodroffe), therefore looked upon Buddhist Tantrism as an off-shoot of Shaivism, which was taken over later by more or less decadent Buddhist schools.

Against this view speaks the great antiquity and consistent development of Tantric tendencies in Buddhism. Already the early Mahasangikas had a special collection of mantric formulas in their *Dharani-Pitaka* ; and the *Manjusri-mulakalpa*, which according to some authorities goes back to the first

century A.D., contains not only mantras and *dharanis*, but numerous mandalas and mudrās as well. By the end of the third century the Buddhist Tantric System had crystallized into definite form, as we see from the well-known *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Tib.: *dPal-gsang-hdus-pa*).

Thus, Benoytosh Bhattacharya is fully justified when he declares in his *Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism* that "it is possible to declare, without fear of contradiction, that the Buddhists were the first to introduce the Tantras into their religion, and that the Hindus borrowed them from the Buddhists in later times, and that it is idle to say that later Buddhism was an outcome of Shaivism." (p. 147)

It is, therefore, thoroughly misleading to judge Buddhist Tantric teachings and symbols from the standpoint of Hindu Tantras. The main difference is that Buddhist Tantrism is not Shaktism. The concept of Shakti, of divine power, or the creative female aspect of the supreme God (Shiva) or his emanations, does not play any role in Buddhism ; in fact, the term Shakti never occurs in Buddhist Tantras. In the Hindu Tantras the concept of power (Shakti) forms the focus of interest. The central idea of Tantric Buddhism, however, is *prajna* (transcendental knowledge or wisdom).

To the Buddhist Shakti is maya, the very power that creates illusion, from which only *prajna* can liberate us. It is not the aim of the Buddhist to acquire power or to join himself to the powers of the universe, either to become their instrument or to become their master, but on the contrary, he tries to free himself from those powers, which for aeons kept him a prisoner of samsara. He strives to *perceive* those powers, which have kept him going in the rounds of birth and death, in order to liberate himself from their dominion. At the same time he does not try to negate them or to destroy them, but to transform them in the fire of knowledge, so that they may become forces of enlightenment which, instead of creating further differentiation, flow in the opposite direc-

¹Just as the Buddha had accepted Brahma, Indra and Shakka.

tion: towards union, towards wholeness, towards completeness.

The attitude of the Hindu Tantras is quite different, if not contrary: "United with Shakti, be full of power", says the *Kula-chudamani Tantra*. "From the union of Siva and Shakti the world is created." The Buddhist, on the other hand, does not strive after the creation and unfoldment of the world, but after the realization of the "un-created, unformed" state of *sunyata*, from which all creation proceeds, or which is prior to and beyond all creation (if one may put the inexpressible into human language).

The becoming conscious of this *sunyata* (Tib.: *stong-pa-nyid*) is *prajna* (Tib.: *shes-rab*) or highest knowledge. The realization of this highest knowledge in life is Enlightenment (*bodhi*; Tib.: *byang-chub*), i.e., if *prajna* (or *sunyata*), the passive, all-embracing female principle, from which everything proceeds and into which everything recedes, is united with the dynamic male principle of active universal love and compassion, which represents the means (*upaya*; Tib.: *thabs*) for the realization of *prajna* and *sunyata*, then perfect Buddhahood is attained. Intellect without feeling, knowledge without love, and reason without compassion lead to pure negation, to rigidity, to spiritual death, to mere vacuity, — while feeling without reason, love without knowledge (blind love), compassion without understanding, lead to confusion and dissolution. But where both are united, where the great synthesis of heart and head, feeling and intellect, highest love and deepest knowledge has taken place, completeness is re-established and perfect enlightenment is attained.

The process of enlightenment is therefore represented by the most obvious, the most human and at the same time the most universal symbol imaginable: the union of male and female in the ecstasy of love, in which the active element (*upaya*) is represented as a male, the passive (*prajna*) as a female figure, in contrast to the Hindu Tantras, in which the female aspect is repre-

sented as *Shakti*, i.e., the active principle, and the male aspect as *Siva*, the state of divine consciousness or 'being', i.e., the passive principle, or 'the resting in its own nature'.

In Buddhist symbolism the Knower (Buddha) becomes one with his knowledge (*prajna*), just as man and wife become one in the embrace of love, and this becoming one is the highest indescribable happiness, *mahasukha* (Tib.: *bDe-mchog*). The Dhyani-Buddhas (i.e., the ideal Buddhas visualized in meditation) and the corresponding Dhyani-Bodhisattvas, as embodiments of the active urge of enlightenment, which finds its expression in *upaya*, the all-embracing love and compassion, are therefore represented in the embrace of their *prajna*, symbolized by a female deity, the embodiment of transcendental knowledge.

This is not the arbitrary reversal of Hindu symbology (as some scholars imagined), but the logical application of a principle which is of fundamental importance for the entire Buddhist Tantric system.

By confusing Buddhist Tantrism with the Shaktism of the Hindu Tantras, a basic misconception has been created, which up to the present day has prevented a clear understanding of the *Vajrayana* and its symbolism in iconography as well as in literature, especially that of the Siddhas. These last used a particular form of symbology, in which very often the highest was clothed in the form of the lowest, the most sacred in form of the most profane, the transcendent in the form of the most earthly, and deepest knowledge in the form of the most grotesque paradoxes. It was not only a language for initiates, but a kind of shock-therapy, which had become necessary on account of the over-intellectualization of the religious and philosophical life of those times.

Though the polarity of male and female principles is recognized in the Tantras of the *Vajrayana* and is an important feature of its symbolism, it is raised to a plane which is as far away from the sphere of mere sexuality as the mathematical juxtaposition of positive

and negative signs, which is as valid in the realm of irrational values as in that of rational or concrete concepts.

In Tibet the male and female Dhyani-Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are regarded as little as 'sexual beings' as in certain schools of Japan; and to the Tibetan even their aspect of union (*yuganaddha*; Tib.: *yab-yum*) is indissolubly associated with the highest spiritual reality in the process of enlightenment, so that associations with the realm of physical sexuality are completely ignored.

We must not forget that the figural representations of these symbols are not looked upon as portraying human beings, but as embodying the experiences and visions of meditation. In such a state, however, there exists nothing that could any longer be called 'sexual'; there is only the super-individual polarity of all life, which rules all mental and physical activities, and which is transcended only in the ultimate state of integration, in the realization of *sunyata*. This is the state which is called *mahamudra* (Tib.: *phyag-rgya-chen-po*), "the Great Symbol", which has given its name to one of the most important systems of meditation in Tibet.

In the earlier forms of Indian Buddhist Tantrism, *Mahamudra* was represented as the 'eternal female' principle, as may be seen from *Advayavajra*'s definition: "The words 'great' and 'mudra' form together the term '*mahamudra*'. She is not something (*nihsvabhava*); she is free from the veils which cover the cognizable object and so on; she shines forth like the serene sky at noon during autumn; she is the support of all success; she is the identity of samsara and nirvana; her body is compassion (*karuna*) which is not restricted to a single object; she is the uniqueness of Great Bliss (*maha-sukhaikarupa*)."²

If in one of the most controversial passages of *Anangavajra*'s "*Prajnapaya-vinish-*

caya-siddhi"³ it is said that all women should be enjoyed by the sadhaka in order to experience the *mahamudra*, it is clear that this cannot be understood in the physical sense, but that it can only be applied to that higher form of love which is not restricted to a single object and which is able to see all 'female' qualities, whether in ourselves or in others, as those of the Divine Mother (*prajna-paramita* or transcendental wisdom).

Another passage, which by its very grotesqueness proves that it is meant to be a paradox, and is not to be taken literally, states that "the sadhaka who has sexual intercourse with his mother, his sister, his daughter, and his sister's daughter, will easily succeed in his striving for the ultimate goal (*tattva-yoga*)."⁴

To take expressions like 'mother', 'sister', 'daughter' or 'sister's daughter' literally in this connection is as senseless as taking literally the well-known *Dhammapada* verse (No. 294), which says that, after having killed father and mother and two Kshattriya kings, and having destroyed a kingdom with all its inhabitants, the *Brahmana* remains free from sin. Here 'father' and 'mother' stand for 'egoism' and 'craving' (Pali: *asmimana* and *tanha*), the 'two kings' for the erroneous views of annihilation or eternal existence (*uccheda va sassata-ditthi*), the 'kingdom and its inhabitants' for 'the twelve spheres of consciousness' (*dvasa-yatanani*) and the *Brahmana* for the liberated monk (*bhikkhu*).

To maintain that Tantric Buddhists actually encouraged incest and licentiousness is as ridiculous as accusing the *Theravadins* of condoning matricide and patricide and similar heinous crimes. If we only take the trouble to investigate the living tradition of the Tantras in their genuine, unadulterated forms, as they existed still in our days in thousands

² Advayavajra, "*Chaturmudra*", p. 34, quoted in "*Yuganaddha*" by H. V. Guenther (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras, 1952).

³ *Prajnapaya-viniscaya-siddhi* in "Two Vajrayana Works", Gaikwad Oriental Series, No. XLIV, p. 22.

⁴ *Anangavajra, Prajnapaya-viniscaya-siddhi* V, 25, quoted in "*Yuganaddha*," p. 106. A similar statement is found in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*.

of monasteries and hermitages of Tibet, where the ideals of sense-control and renunciation were held in the highest esteem, then only can we realize how ill-founded and worthless are the current theories which try to drag the Tantras into the realm of sensuality.

From the point of view of the Tibetan Tantric tradition, the above-mentioned passages can only be meaningful in the context of yoga terminology.

'All women in the world' signifies all the elements which make up the female principles of our psycho-physical personality which, as the Buddha says, represents what is called 'the world'. To these principles correspond on the opposite side an equal number of male principles. Four of the female principles form a special group, representing the vital forces (*prana*) of the Great Elements (*mahabhuta*), Earth, Water, Fire, Air and their corresponding psychic centres (*chakra*) or planes of consciousness within the human body. In each of them the union of male and female principles must take place, before the fifth and highest stage is reached. If the expressions 'mother', 'sister', 'daughter', etc., are applied to the forces of these fundamental qualities of the *mahabhutas*, the meaning of the symbolism becomes clear.

In other words, instead of seeking union with a woman outside ourselves, we have to seek it within ourselves ("in our own family") by the union of our male and female qualities in the process of meditation. This is clearly stated in Naropa's famous Six Doctrines (Tib.: *chos drug bsdus-pahi zin-bris*), upon which the most important yoga-

practice of the *bKah-rgyud-pa* School is based, a *yoga* that was practised by Milarepa (*Mi-la-ras-pa*), the most saintly and austere of all great masters of meditation (whom certainly nobody could accuse of 'sexual practices'). Though we cannot go here into the details of this *yoga*, a short quotation may suffice to prove our point. "The vital force of the Five Aggregates (*skandha*: Tib.: *phung-po*) in its real nature, pertaineth to the masculine aspect of the Buddha-principle manifesting through the left psychic nerve (*ida-nadi*; Tib.: *rkyang-ma rtsa*). The vital force of the Five Elements (*dhatu*; Tib.: *hbyung-ba*), in its real nature, pertaineth to the feminine aspect of the Buddha-principle manifesting through the right psychic nerve (*pingala-nadi*; Tib.: *roma-rtsa*). As the vital force with these two aspects of it in union, descendeth into the median nerve (*sushumna*-Tib.: *dbu-ma rtsa*) gradually there cometh the realization..." and one attains the transcendental boon of the Great Symbol (*mahamudra*; Tib.: *phyag-rgya-chen-po*),⁵ the union of the male and female principles (as *upaya* and *prajna*) in the highest state of Buddhahood.

Thus, only if we are able to see the relationship of body and mind, of physical and spiritual interaction in a universal perspective, and if in this way we overcome the "I" and "mine" and the whole structure of egocentric feelings, opinions and prejudices, which produce the illusion of our separate individuality, then only can we rise into the sphere of Buddhahood.

⁵ W. Y. Evans-Wentz and Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup: "Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines", p. 220 ff.

Meditation is the gateway to Knowledge. Though the servant were to serve God for a thousand years and then another thousand but were ignorant of the practice of meditation, all his service would but increase his distance from God.

—AL MUHASIBI.

THE PRACTICE OF SHEE NEY (Concentration)

By HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

In the article that he contributed to our issue of April 1964, His Holiness spoke of Buddhism as followed by people in general. Only in the last paragraph did he indicate that a more potent (but also more dangerous) path is available for those who aspire. In the present article he gives some idea of the perseverance and technical know-how that is necessary in order to follow such a path — enough at any rate to show that it cannot be followed from books but requires direct personal guidance.

Essentially SHEE NEY (Concentration) means fixing the stilled mind, the mind while experiencing a state of euphoria on any chosen object. If the concentration is on the Buddhist Refuges it is Buddhist concentration. If it is on Bodichitta, it becomes Mahayanic Buddhist concentration.

When one fully acquires the power of concentration, one not only achieves physical and mental happiness but also acquires supernatural perception and can perform miracles and other wonderful feats. The main purpose is through SHEE NEY to attain the transcendental meditation, (Lhakthong) which realises Sunyata and cuts off samsara at its very root. Almost all the knowledge of Tri-Yana (the three doctrinal expositions made by Buddha) can thus be understood. Therefore this concentration has many advantages. The preliminary requirements for it are as follows :

1. Sound disturbs concentration. So the place to practise concentration should be secluded, solitary and climatically congenial.

2. The practiser should be a person with few needs and easily contented. He should have severed himself from worldly affairs and should abstain from immoral action or speech.

3. He should be well versed in instructions on concentration. He should be fully aware of the ill-effects of desire and the ephemeral nature of the phenomenal world.

To accomplish this type of concentration, Maitreya Buddha (the one who is yet to



come) has taught that one must get free from the five defects by putting into practice the eight kinds of contemplation. The five defects to be given up are :

- (a) An indolent attitude towards concentration.
- (b) Forgetfulness of the object of concentration.
- (c) Interference such as the mind becoming too sluggish or over active.
- (d) Failure in adopting counter measures against such interference.

- (e) Adoption of counter measures after the disappearance of the interference.

The eight attitudes of mind that are adopted to avoid these five defects are :

1. Faith in the virtues of concentration.
2. Earnest desire to attain it.
3. Perseverance in following it happily.
4. Ecstatic happiness of mind and body.
5. Remembering to give absolute concentration to the object of concentration.
6. Though the mind is fully concentrating on a particular object a part of it must also be watchful of any inclination to distraction.
7. When danger of distraction is perceived immediate mental preparation must be made to counteract it ; and
8. If and when counter-measures have been taken and their purpose achieved, the thought of such action must then be relaxed.

The implementation of these 8 forms of thought is indispensable.

There are nine rules or stages of concentration. These are :

1. Complete absorption of the mind in the one object of concentration.
2. Constant endeavour to prolong the concentration.
3. Perceiving immediately when one's mind is diverted from the object of concentration and redirecting it to its proper place.
4. Gradually conceiving certain details of the object of concentration.
5. Conceiving the attainment of concentration one should strengthen one's efforts.
6. At this stage one's feeling of aversion to concentration is dispelled and one is in a better position to concentrate without much disturbance.
7. To be immediately aware of and dispel even the slightest distracting thought while in concentration.
8. Having reached the stage when one is capable of dispelling any distraction one must now endeavour to prolong the period of concentration to the furthest ; and

9. Owing to constant practice one can now concentrate without much effort and contemplation comes more or less automatically.

The above nine stages of concentration can be accomplished by means of six forces as follows :

- (1) The force of hearing can accomplish stage one ;
- (2) The force of reflection can accomplish stage two ;
- (3) The force of memory can accomplish stages three and four ;
- (4) The force of wisdom can accomplish stages five and six ;
- (5) The force of energy can accomplish stages seven and eight ; and
- (6) The force of complete acquaintance can accomplish stage nine.

The first and second stages of concentration require the most strenuous absorption of the mind. In the next five stages (3, 4, 5, 6, and 7) one has attained a certain amount of practice and concentration is possible with some breaks from time to time. In the eighth stage the mind can now concentrate fully as may be required. In the ninth or last stage one is able to practise perfect concentration without having to make any effort.

When one has understood the purpose, the order of stages in concentration and the distinction between each stage and implemented them, it will not be difficult to acquire profound meditation. This is a general type of concentration, but when one applies concentration to one's own mind it has other purposes.

To concentrate on mind one must first be able to identify what is mind. Mind is not visible, it has no shape, colour or size, and yet it can provide thought and imagination and identify anything that can be felt or is visible. Once you are able to recognise the mind you can take it as the object of concentration and proceed with the same process of abandoning the five defects and

implementing the eight forms of thought in the nine stages of concentration by means of the six forces.

What we have said above is a very brief extract of the instruction given by Maitreya Buddha and Ayasanga on meditation.

As mentioned above, if concentration is performed in accordance with the nine stages then at the ninth stage it becomes

possible without effort or distraction and can be prolonged at will, thus achieving mental and physical happiness. After attaining effective mental and physical happiness, if further absolute concentration is applied then profound meditation has been achieved. This achievement is classified as the preparatory stage of the bodily meditation which is one of the three forms of meditation.

ARUNACHALA RAMANA

By G. L. N.

To think of Arunachala is Salvation! Let our mind be ever absorbed in the thought o Arunachala.

Sri Arunachala and Sage Ramana were both aspects of the One. They were manifestations and visible symbols of Transcendental Reality the realisation of which liberates man from the thralldom of Maya. The Holy Hill was the *Mula Vighraha* and Bhagavan Ramana was the *Utsava Murthi*. Ramana Maharshi dramatised and vivified the Eternal Truth for which the Sacred Arunachala stands. It was necessary in order to re-enthroned in the hearts of people an abiding faith in the glory of Arunachala. The sacredness of Arunachala is not a myth, but very real — this was emphasized by Bhagavan Ramana by his own example, and by precept.

The lofty peak that was reached by people through the several paths leading to it; the pinnacle of Light that shone gloriously and invitingly above, far above, the din and bustle, the noise and turmoil, the misery and suffering, of worldly life; the Holy Hill on which dwelt Yogis, Bhaktas, Jnanis, aspirants, pursuing the various paths to the Supreme Godhead — represents the Absolute Brahman, the Goal of all, the Transcendental Reality that beckons you to merge yourself in its limitless bliss.



Calm, self-absorbed, silent, blissful and serene, Sage Ramana conveyed the very same message; only that message was illuminated by his own illustrious life. It became a living message and therefore more convincing to the modern mind.

The pinnacle of glory and Self-illumination that Bhagavan Ramana reached every one can reach, if only one is prepared to ascend the hill of Sadhana. People should have faith in the Scriptures, in the words of a Siddha-Purusha and in themselves. They should ceaselessly strive to attain the Eternal. That is the Message of Arunachala and Ramana.

HERMETIC SYMBOLISM

By SAGITTARIUS

With due apologies, our editor is too much of a theoretician.¹ In India Tantrism may still be a living path that people can follow; but in the West Hermetism, its Western equivalent, is not. Therefore its study can have no more than an academic interest. It is certainly not one of the "paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world" which *The Mountain Path*, by its own announcement, professes to clarify.

Once a tradition dies it cannot be revived. Understanding its symbolism does not enable one to follow it as a path. For that there would have to be an unbroken transmission of its technique through a chain of gurus, and this is just what is lacking; in fact that is why it died. Alchemy as a spiritual science has long ceased to exist. Masonry is no longer an operative technique of building cathedrals and characters simultaneously. Some few astrologers delve into the symbolism of their science but the skill has long vanished that could use it as a technique of the quest. This is a time when more simple and direct techniques are needed. Therefore they are available; because Divine Providence always makes available what is needed.

Having said this, it may be interesting (though no more than interesting) to see how Hermetic symbolism was used in former times. There are a number of great Renaissance writers—Cervantes, Shakespeare and Rabelais among them—whose work contains symbolism of the Quest in one or another of its many forms. Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is a veritable treasure-house of symbolism. It was natural that writers who had a precious lore which they knew to be vanishing should wish to leave a record of it; and just because it was vanishing few people would care to read a direct exposi-

tion of it. So it was wrapped up in symbols in works whose sheer literary excellence carried it through the ages until the time should come when men were again interested to seek and to recover records of past search. That time has now come. Granted that the masses, both of the ignorant and the learned, are more unenlightened spiritually than ever before, nevertheless a new impetus is driving small groups and isolated rebels to reject modern ignorance and seek the perennial philosophy that has been lost.

Moreover Hermetism is by its very nature symbolical and lends itself to symbolical treatment. With its roots in alchemy, astrology and masonry, it is or was an intricate science for the rectification and harmonisation of the experimenter, leading stage by stage through the lesser mysteries to the greater. It is interesting to note that, like Tantrism in India, it was not a science for the recluse or the celibate but was open to the laity, just as Tantrism was to non-Brahmins.

Another Christian development with a basic resemblance to Tantrism was the cult of the Madonna, the 'Mother of God'. Closely allied to this was the troubadour's adoration of his lady who, according to the rules of the art, was supposed to be humanly inaccessible to him. In fact the wife of some person of higher rank was often cast for the part. However that does not concern us here.

The masonry may have used much the same symbolism that Free Masonry does to-day, but it was also an operative science by which the building of the highly symbolical Gothic cathedrals was at the same time a technique of training for the builder. Not only the general form but all the proportions were rigidly determined by the laws of symbolism.

¹ Rebuke merited.—EDITOR.

Spiritual alchemy was a science by which the baser elements in oneself were transmuted into pure gold. This was no poetic fancy. Nor was it mere theory or philosophical speculation. It normally did involve actual experimentation with physical substances but, strange though that may appear, these symbolised microcosmic and macrocosmic forces and aimed at developing the stunted faculties and rectifying the warped impulses of the experimenter and conversion of his lower tendencies into higher. It was only the bogus alchemist and the quack who was impelled by greed of gain and whose object really was to make gold and grow rich quick. From this point of view, what comes nearest to alchemy in modern times is psycho-analysis; but alchemy was more complete and more scientific.

The central and most important difference is that the aspirant was guided towards higher states of spiritual equilibrium and even realization by guides who had themselves attained these states, whereas psycho-analysis knows nothing of any such attainment and has no guides to it. A psychologist may disbelieve in religion, like Freud, or believe in it, like Jung, but this is not a question of belief but of knowledge and attainment. The state of 'individuation' to which Jung's treatment is supposed to lead is merely the state of the ordinary mundane man bounded by sense experience and rational understanding, who may (or may not) be competent to begin the course of training for higher development which was the sole purpose of Hermetism. At least one modern psychologist, Dr. Hans Jacobs, has been percipient enough to see that Hindu sadhana (and one could say the same of Western Hermetism) begins where Western psycho-therapy ends.²

A second important difference, resulting from the first, is that Hermetism insisted on moral purity. It is difficult to generalise about modern psychologists, since they are divided into so many schools, but it can be

said on the whole that they reject the idea of sin and teach their victims not to feel guilt for wrong things done but to explain them away, while there are some who, in certain cases, advise the exorcising of harmful impulses by indulging them. In contrast to this, Hermetism insisted on purity and dedication before even beginning the Great Work. It had to be undertaken in a spirit of reverence and devotion. So far was it from being motivated by greed for gold that the experimenter was pledged to desirelessness and poverty. He was warned that without perfect purity his experiments could not succeed. This attitude was not merely an unthinking echo of a pious age but was rigorously scientific. It is egoism that warps a man's impulses and stunts his faculties, giving rise to anger, fear and desire and destroying his peace of mind. A valid training will, therefore, insist on the abandonment of all conscious egoism while hunting for the hidden roots of unconscious egoism. It is only when these are torn out that serenity and equilibrium will be attained. Any course of treatment which connives at egoism can at best change the nature of the disequilibrium but cannot cure it.

The love and purity that were demanded were not mere emotionalism, such as one finds too often in a modern religious revival, but were combined with knowledge, without which no solid achievement is likely to be made. Together with the symbolism of alchemy, that of astrology also was used. The use of astrology for prediction was a practical adaptation analogous to physical experimentation in alchemy. It might be very effective when properly handled, nevertheless the element of self-seeking in it brought it into contempt and was ultimately largely responsible for the condemnation of astrology as a whole. Its higher and purer use was as a Hermetic technique for the training of aspirants. Lest this seem a vague statement, a brief outline follows of some of its main features.

From the aspirant's horoscope were seen the various harmonising or conflicting quali-

² See *Western Psycho-Therapy and Hindu Sadhana*, Allen and Unwin.

ties in him, indicating what particular course his training should take. Jacob Boehme, the great mystic philosopher of the Renaissance period who left an explicit record of the vanishing science, declares quaintly that if a certain planet becomes too obstreperous it should be whipped and stood in a corner. In other words, if the tendency symbolised by a planet dominates too much, distorting the equilibrium of one's nature and finding expression in inadmissible ways, it must be disciplined and held in check.

The symbolism was both real and intricate. The sun in a person's horoscope is his deepest and most genuine nature (how he reveals himself in moments of sudden crisis or bare sincerity) and may be quite different from the impression he makes on others and on himself in day-to-day living. The moon, on the other hand, is his emotional, temperamental nature. So, for instance, one who has the sun in Aries and the moon in Taurus will be easy-going, conservative, restful, in his daily life but when necessary will show a capability for enterprise and initiative which will surprise those who think they know him. On the other hand, one who has the sun in Taurus and the moon in Aries will be lively, alert and original in manner and speech, but one will gradually come to see that his initiative is in defence of security and established order, not in defiance of them. Furthermore, the sun and moon may be in harmonious or inharmonious relationship with one another; the solar nature may reinforce the lunar or clash with it. The Hermetist whose training was based on a study of his horoscope would be taught to make his solar nature dominate over his lunar when there was need for a decision. If the two clashed he would have to temper one with the other, see which impulses stemmed from one and which from the other and decide which were appropriate in the given circumstances.

We say that 'he' must undertake this adjustment, but who is this 'he'? Obviously the mind; and the mind is Mercury, that is Hermes, the presiding spirit of Hermetism,

the intermediary, the messenger of the gods, the hermaphrodite, neither male nor female, neither aggressive nor receptive, whose function is to inform and understand, even to manipulate, the planetary forces. His nature too is indicated by his position in the horoscope: it may show, for instance, the sympathetic understanding of water, the intellectual understanding of air, the passionate, ardent understanding of fire, or the sober, practical understanding of earth. Insofar as he is the manipulator he may be regarded as the most important planet in the horoscope, and yet he too can be dangerous and require discipline. Being a ruler of dual signs, he can be undecided; being neither male nor female, he can be sterile; governing air and earth, he can lack the sympathy of water and the ardour of fire. If not watched he can degenerate into the dry scholar or timid critic, afraid to act.

Next come Mars and Venus, male and female, aggression and conciliation, the only real opposites in the horoscope (for although Jupiter and Saturn are in some ways opposite, as will be shown below, it must be remembered that zodiacally they are not, Jupiter being opposite to Mercury, while Saturn is to the sun and moon). But the opposition can be harmonized into a wedding; and it is significant that in Graeco-Latin mythology they are indeed husband and wife.³ An element of aggression, assertion, enterprise, is necessary in every one who takes the path; without it he would never venture and therefore never attain. But an element of harmony and conciliation is also necessary or he would rush headlong to ruin. A study of the horoscope will show of what nature each of these is and in what relation they stand to each other as well as to the other planetary forces, indicating how they need to be developed, co-related, disciplined which needs to be strengthened and which toned down, and in what direction to watch out for dangers.

³ I am speaking here only of the symbolical basis of Western Hermetism. In Hindu astrology Venus is male.

And finally the mighty couple of Jupiter and Saturn. The entire quest is a two-fold process of expansion and contraction, symbolised by these two planets, expanding a man's faculties while at the same time crushing him to the point of 'self-naughting', as the mediaeval mystics put it. Christ said that a man must be poor enough to pass through the eye of a needle. He also said that when a man attains the kingdom of heaven all else shall be added to him. This represents two successive stages: first contraction of the ego to nothingness, then infinite expansion. But in actual practice the two stages are seldom clearly divided. The adding and subtraction or expansion and squeezing go on side by side, and that is the trouble. An aspirant may go through alternate phases of expansion, when grace floods his heart and the quest is a lilt of joy, and contraction when he seems to have lost everything he had gained on the path and to be squeezed to the bones, when all is dryness and he is tempted to despond and can do nothing but grit his teeth and hold on with grim perseverance. In this sense, Jupiter is the benefic and Saturn the malefic; but there is also another sense in which Jupiter represents a grave danger to the aspirant from which only the stern discipline of Saturn can save him. That is when the process of expansion takes the form of new powers and perceptions on the subtle plane which may seduce him from his path, as Circe did the companions of Odysseus. Like Circe, they may also turn their victims into swine. A true guru will encourage no such things. Let them come after the kingdom of heaven has been attained, as Christ said. The Maharshi said that even when powers come unsought they should not be accepted. They are like a rope to tether a horse.

This outline may serve to show how vital and at the same time how intricate the symbolism was. However a concrete example carries more weight than generalisations, so let us trace Shakespeare's use of astrological symbolism in 'Twelfth Night'.

The Duke and Olivia are the sun and moon. The Duke is lovesick for Olivia, but

a sickly, romantic love for a beauty he has never seen. This represents the man who pines nostalgically for the ideal state of a lost childhood or imagined perfection. No such state can be recaptured. A person who retains the mind of a child when he grows up, thereby avoiding the 'fall' into adult sophistication, becomes a monstrosity. What was lovable in the child becomes offensive in one who should have outgrown it. The virtual or ideal perfection of childhood cannot be recovered; it must be actualised as the virtual perfection of the Earthly Paradise is to be actualised in the realized perfection of the Heavenly Jerusalem. This, to bring in another item of Mediaeval symbolism, was the 'squaring of the circle'. The circle represents the virtual perfection where no point strays further from the centre than any other. But a man is dragged out on one side by desire and pushed in on another by fear until all symmetry of form is lost. Then, when he takes up the Great Work, he sets himself not to recover the lost circle, which would be impossible, but to hammer the form foursquare.

Attainment of actualised perfection is brought about by the 'Hermetic marriage', that is by the interposition of Mercury (Hermes in Greek, whence the name 'Hermetism') between sun and moon. Mercury is the Messenger of the gods. He is equated with intellectual intuition and therefore more or less equivalent to the Hindu 'buddhi'. The ancient Greeks symbolised him also by the phallus, another instrument of union. It was a saying of the alchemists that Mercury is the true Christ, the Mediator between God and man. He is represented in mythology as hermaphrodite, as having both sexes or none. Astrologically he is the ruler of Virgo, the virgin sign, and Gemini, the heavenly twins. And this brings us back to 'Twelfth Night', where Mercury appears as the twin sister and brother, Viola and Sebastian, who intervene between sun and moon, Duke and Olivia.

Olivia, the 'moon', the human nature or temperament according to astrology, is the

person needing treatment. Her household (horoscope) is in a terrible state of disarray. Sir Toby Belch is the very picture of a degenerate Jupiter — his expansiveness degenerated into gluttony, his magnanimity into boastfulness, his grandeur into riotousness. He is in conjunction with Mars, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in Taurus (as he himself says). Taurus, it will be remembered, is the 'detriment' of Mars, where he is apt to be quarrelsome but cowardly, which is just what Sir Andrew was. Malvolio, a hypocritical Puritan, scheming and coldly ambitious, is just as much a caricature of Saturn as Sir Toby is of Jupiter or Sir Andrew of Mars in detriment. Olivia's pert, pretty, flirtatious maid is Venus. Although Mercury as a Divine Agent is represented as

the twins, Viola and Sebastian, Mercury in a human sense, as an ingredient in Olivia's household or horoscope is the Fool: clever, pert and flippant.

With brilliant wit and technique the twins are introduced into this menage and restore order in it by accomplishing the 'Hermetic Marriage', the male twin wedding Olivia and the female the Duke, while the disordered 'planets' are disciplined and brought to order. Here is evidence enough that, humanist as he was, Shakespeare was more also. He had knowledge of the hidden Hermetic science which, even in his day, was being forgotten and abandoned. To some extent it is still possible to study it but not to relive it. To think otherwise would only be fooling oneself. And others.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

By A. RAO

A pretty children's tale is found
Of how a lady slept spell-bound
Through time's long night, till for her sake
A daring rescuer should break
Through many perils and with a kiss
Wake her to endless bliss.

In each man's heart she sleeps, her dower
The lost domain of man's true power.

The same she is
As that coiled serpent of the East
Who, when released,
Strikes up from stage to higher stage
Till, breaking through the mental cage,
Blaze the white-shining ecstasies.

First the wise man gave the knight
The sword of concentration, bright,
Invulnerable; for defence
A cloak, invisible to sense,
Of pure detachment. Yet alone
The hero fought and won

Where many fell along the way
To visions, learning, pride, display,
To harlots claiming to be her
Whose waking wakes her rescuer,
Or taverns where the weaklings rest,
Called but not chosen for the quest.

Blest now the land!
Humbled the tyrant mind!
Freedom erect to stand
For all mankind!

Now, ever after —
Joy, serene laughter!
Fallen the prison wall
Roof-tree and rafter!
Never to be built again
Life's house of pain,
Never hereafter!

SWAMI NITYANANDA, SIDDHA AND AVADHUTA

By PRATIBHA TRIVEDI

Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri, who died as recently as August 1961, was one of the great spiritual masters of our times. He was a Siddha, that is a man of powers, of whom many miracles are recorded, an Avadhūta or wandering solitary one outside the regular paths and schools. What sort of path or sadhana he followed in his early life and whether he had a guru or not is not known.

He became famous as the Lord of Ganeshpuri, a township that sprang up around him outside Bombay. Its very existence was a wonder. It was a desolate jungle spot in which a sadhu wearing only a loincloth and with no possessions took up his abode some twenty years back. Feeling the power and grace that emanated from him, devotees flocked around and built houses there so as to be near to him. Donations poured in and although he kept and wanted nothing for himself, his advice was practical in worldly as well as in spiritual matters and a complete township grew up around him with electricity and water supply, hotels, shops, schools, dispensary, rest-houses for sadhus, etc. As his fame spread ever wider such crowds thronged there that queues had to be formed to have darshan of him.

His own life remained as simple and bare of possessions as ever. He sat on a stone platform covered with an old blanket, clad only in a loincloth, accessible to all who came, until towards the end the crowds grew too large and had to be regulated. He wanted nothing, valued nothing. He would often say, "All is dust". And yet he was supremely compassionate, moved by the slightest suffering. Thousands came to him for help and protection. Some of them were spiritual aspirants seeking his Grace; others sought his blessings for worldly success—business or profession, employment, health, family,



all manner of human pre-occupations; all he received with like compassion and all alike knew him as Baba or Father. But even while giving advice on worldly matters he never abandoned the standpoint of the One

Self, bidding the recipients of his Grace see all in the One and the One in all.

It was about half a century back that he first became known as a wandering Swami. Before going to Ganeshpuri he stayed for some years in the district of Mangalore, where he was known for his healing powers and the wide profusion of miracles he performed. At this time he had an ashram at Kanhangad which is now known as Sri Nityananda Ashram. About four miles away from it there is a deep cave in a wild part of the forest in the hills where he performed tapas, and this is known as Guruban.

During this period of his life Swami Ramdas has recounted the following meeting with him. "Swami Nityanand, a great yogi, was residing in Hosdrug. He made several improvements in the old, neglected Hosdrug fort. He was attracting people from all parts of the South Kanara District and even from far off places. His darshan was rightly considered by devotees to be of immense spiritual benefit. Ramdas had the opportunity of meeting him once when he was dwelling in the Panch-Pandava caves. He had no cloth on his body except a kaupin.¹ He was dark in complexion, but possessed a tall, fully-developed, well-proportioned body. One of his characteristic features was that his face was always suffused with most bewitching smiles. As he was seen always sunk in divine bliss his devotees gave him the name Nityanand, meaning 'everlasting bliss'. One day, towards the end of the second year of the ashram,² one of the ashramites, Krishnappa, brought him to us. We gave him due honour and made him drink the cool water of a tender coconut. He did not speak a word. After remaining with us for about ten minutes he went away."³

Similarly when at Ganeshpuri, he was established permanently in the Self-lumi-

nous and Self-existent state of Satchidananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, beyond the duality of good or bad, high or low, beyond even the apparent duality of knowledge or ignorance, liberation or bondage. And yet, although all passed as a two-dimensional shadow before his eyes, he did in fact see and hear and distinguish and could approve or disapprove of what people did on the plane of good and evil on which they were content to abide and bestow on them what were benefits on the level of values to which they clung.

He did not teach in words. He had little use for books or theory. "Books are for those who are not secure in knowledge. Stable, eternal and indivisible is Knowledge," he said.

He did not teach dependence on any power outside oneself. "By one's own thoughts one can be bad; by one's own thoughts one can be good also. God does neither good nor harm to any one."

He did not give initiation as usually understood and gave no mantra to repeat, laid down no technique of spiritual practice. The power of his presence was enough. His proximity would itself calm and purify the mind. One sat before him and doubts and anxieties were smoothed away; questions that had worried one did not seem worth asking. Parched souls felt coolness near him and those in distress found peace.

He did not instruct his devotees openly in words but sometimes threw out hints obliquely in a way that only the person for whom they were intended would understand. Indeed, this was perhaps necessary since he never gave a private interview to anyone but had to be approached and questioned openly in the presence of others. But his real teaching did not depend on verbal answers at all; it was an eloquent silent influence on the heart of the seeker.

Nevertheless, he did in fact guide seekers on the path. He was not merely a lamp to give light to others but to kindle their lamps also. He was a Siddha-Yogi, a man of strange powers. If he looked inactive it was

¹ loincloth.

² This means of Anandashram, the ashram of Swami Ramdas—EDITOR

³ In the Vision of God' by Swami Ramdas, p. 450 of the 1962 edition. Published by Bhavan's Book University, Chapaty, Bombay-7.

as a top does when spinning at high speed, seeming the more stationary the faster it rotates. Under the silent radiation of his power the dormant spirit of the aspirant who approached him in true sincerity awakened and came to life. This silent transmission of Divine Power from Master to disciple is known as Shaktipata, about which the Vayavya Samhita writes: "When by the mere sight, touch or word of a Guru divine consciousness is immediately opened in a person it is known as Shambhavi diksha." When asked by a disciple he would recommend some type of sadhana according to the needs of the particular person who asked. In general he stressed the importance of meditation and devotion to the Guru. However, his silent spiritual influence was the most potent factor. Sometimes also he canalised the flow of power by the laying on of hands. The effect of this could be tremendous. It often resulted in awakening the dormant Kundalini in the disciple.

There are many still living who had the good fortune of being blessed by his touch or presence and experienced the power and skill of his guidance. He was a dynamo of energy and a power-house of shakti. He was a Satguru who took full responsibility for the guidance of his disciples.

• Although he taught mainly by silence, very little in words, the following pregnant sayings of his may well be pondered :

"There is no contentment without purification of mind and no Liberation without purification of consciousness by which one merges into Atman like a piece of ice placed in water."

"One must live in the world like a boat on the sea — on it but separate from it."

"It is not bhakti to give a man some money or a meal in charity. Bhakti is uni-

versal love. Seeing God in all beings without the least idea of duality is bhakti."

"Turn inwards. Without meditation the mind cannot be steadied."

"When the ego is completely destroyed the world is seen as a reflection."

"Detach yourself from the world if you would realize your true Self."

"Liberation means seeing the One in all and all in the One."

"Hate and anger are signs of ignorance."

"If you have a pure heart and true urging God is not far away."⁴

In greatness and glory he can be compared with Sai Baba of Shirdi,⁵ and indeed, there is a certain similarity between them, since he also taught his disciples to seek through complete devotion and surrender to the Guru. The greater the devotion and more wholehearted the surrender the more powerful flow of Shaktipata does it evoke and the greater therefore is the disciple's progress. He was like Sai Baba also in giving no formal initiation and no mantra. And both alike discouraged theorising and excessive reading. Neither of them wrote anything.

Although this great Master passed away in 1961, the atmosphere of Ganeshpuri is still charged with his Presence. He is buried there and his shrine has become a centre of pilgrimage for thousands. They feel the force of Shaktipata and are silently strengthened and guided on the path as they were in his lifetime.

⁴ From a collection of sayings noted down by a lady disciple and published in Kannada under the title 'Chidakashgita' translated into English by M. P. Pandit under the title 'Voice of the Self'.

⁵ For whom see an article in our issue of July 1964. See also 'The Incredible Sai Baba' by Arthur Osborne, published by Orient Longmans, Calcutta, and Rider & Co., London.

Both at birth and death one is free. Maya comes in only in between.

— SWAMI NITYANANDA

A YANTRA FOR SCORPION STINGS

By ETHEL MERSTON

To my dispensary in the U.P. would come scorpion stung patients in agony, but no medicine was efficacious in stopping the pain under hours. Left to itself it can continue for 24 hours or more.

The English engineer who was then building the Dufferin Bridge over-road, while visiting me one day was telling me stories of his career and, amongst them how, at a tiny local station on the line, the station-master, an Indian, had taught him a yantra for scorpion stings so prevalent amongst the coolies working on the lines, who are often stung when they disturb scorpions while raising old sleepers. The yantra, which my friend had used for years, rarely failed to relieve the pain at once. It was just what I needed and I begged him to teach me the drawing and its use. He did so and it has never failed to cure a patient within two or three minutes of application. Only in one case, where the patient had been stung some twenty hours before coming to the dispensary and the poison had travelled right up the arm and down the back did the cure take some 15 minutes perhaps. The procedure is as follows :

First, where possible, tourniquet the stung limb well above the extreme point of the pain.

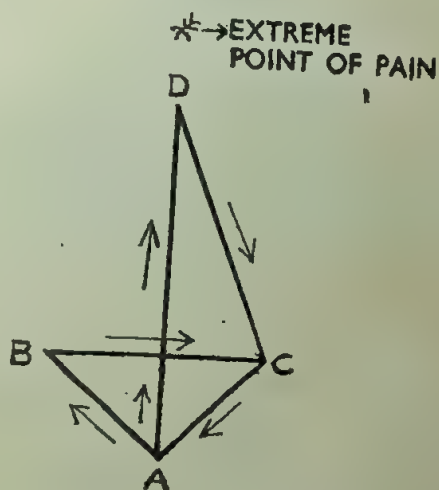
Next, take a pen (but not a gold-nibbed fountain pen) and on the skin of the patient, between the tourniquet and the extreme point of pain, draw the yantra in ink in one continuous movement, running A to B to C to A to D to C.

The line A D should, as it were, shoot at the point of pain and should be rather longer than AB or CA.

Having drawn the yantra, ask the patient where the pain is now, He will point to a

spot nearer to the sting, the poison having retracted. Draw the yantra again towards the point he mentions. Then again ask and again draw, and so on until the poison has retracted to the stung place. There one may have to do the yantra several times around the spot, always with AD pointed

⊙ → STING



TOURNIQUET

inwards to the sting, before the pain goes entirely. If no very long time has elapsed between the sting and the time the patient has treatment, two or three drawings usually suffice on the limb and perhaps three or four at the sting before the pain vanishes completely. In the case of the poor man who had delayed so long before coming and who could not be tourniqueted, he had yantras about every two inches up his back and down his arm to the sting in his hand; he was covered in pen and ink drawings before I had done with him!

Now, readers may ask, "How does this yantra work?" I don't know, no one has ever been able to explain it to me. Has it to do with the metal in the nib or chemical in the ink to which the poison is allergic and before which it retreats? Is it iron in the nib and the combination of it and the ink? Thinking it might be this, I tried one day with a rusty nail and ink, and it worked just as well—this is useful to know in a village where the stung patients are likely to be illiterate and have no pen or ink, or a city where steel nibs are obsolete.

I should much like some chemist to tell me what there is in scorpion poison that

could be allergic to and retreat before a constituent of the nib or ink, but then, of course, any squiggle would work as well as the yantra, which it does not.

I myself was once stung by a scorpion I had picked up from my pillow thinking it to be a dead leaf, and though I could draw the yantra only very shakily with my left hand, it worked immediately. the pain left entirely and there were no after effects, not even soreness from the sting.

The yantra is indeed a useful remedy in this scorpion-infested land.

DARSHAN

By DR. K. B. PISPATI

A sannyasin of about 30 or 35 came into the hall one day when I was there. He was an M.A. of Bombay University who had retired to a solitary place to lead a life of tapas. While sitting in his cave one day he saw a number of concentric circles; then there was a loud noise and a vision of Bhagavan Ramana who advised him to go to his Ashram and see him. He prostrated and then sat down and asked a few questions about yoga.

When we went out I spoke with him and asked him why he had taken sannyas. He said he was not interested in the life of the world but only in yoga. He said that he often had visions of Bhagavan and saw him as clearly as to-day. He said that the purpose of his visit to the Ashram was attained, and soon after he left.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

VI

By FIROZA TALEYARKHAN

Many people ask me why I am living here in Tiruvannamalai, so I would like to write about my experiences and how my Lord Ramana brought me here and kept me here. I have been very fortunate from childhood up in coming in contact with high souls and saints, amongst them the renowned woman saint Babajan whose life was a mystery, no one knowing where she came from or how old she was. It happened one day that I took her for a drive in Poona when we were there and as we passed the Fort she pointed to it and said, "King Shivaji and I used to play here." I was stunned because that would make her several centuries old. She was a great saint. Thousands of people benefited from her blessings. Poor people became rich and others became sadhus or saints. Even now prayers made at her shrine are answered. She showered her Grace on me and played a great part in my life, but here I have no space to write about all that.

Then there was Harilal Baba who stood in the Ganges at Benares looking at the sun from sunrise to sunset. He never stirred even when there were storms and floods and the water passed over him. He became blind from staring at the sun, but his inner light was powerful. I had the wonderful experience of his Grace and blessings.

I became attached to dear Gandhiji and Ba, his wonderful wife, who was a little saint. Gandhiji invited me to stay with him. I could have chosen that kind of life. His love and kindness were overwhelming. But I felt that politics were not my line; I was in search of something real which I did not know.

I was in Budh Gayd for ten years making sadhana. Of course, there was great benefit



and I had wonderful experiences; still my heart was aching to meet some one who could really show me God. One day of Grace I met some one who told me about Ramana Maharshi. I had never heard of him before. The moment I opened the book about him I was struck by the beauty of his face. I immediately wrote to Ramanashram but did not receive an encouraging reply, so I dropped the idea of going there.

Swami Yogendra and I planned to open an ashram for ladies together called 'The Home of Devotion'. (The Swami now has an Ashram at Khar.) We started trying to organize it but then I thought that before embarking on our new venture I would go to Tiruvannamalai to ask the Maharshi for his blessings. I stayed there for four days and showed him the prospectus of our

scheme and asked for his blessings on it. I left thinking that I had them, as it was not his way to say definitely 'yes' or 'no' when people told him their schemes. But to my great surprise we shortly received a refusal from the government to rent us the land and buildings on Kadevly Hill which they had promised us. You can imagine my disappointment. I really lost my temper with Sri Bhagavan. I was wondering why they called him 'Bhagavan', for what sort of blessings were these? It was only much later that I understood that I had had his Grace all along. I went back to Tiruvannamalai longing to say: "How can I believe in you after what has happened to my cherished scheme?" Meanwhile a lady came to the Ashram and told Bhagavan that she was working hard to collect money to help people in distress and asked him whether that was not a good thing to do. Bhagavan took a book and showed her a passage to read. As I was sitting beside her I could read it too and it made me smile. Bhagavan looked at me and said: "It's for you too."

It said: "A frail woman who has the peace of God can do more to help a country or mankind than all the intellectuals put together."

That very moment something within me told me that he was right. He knew that I was not yet ripe for the responsible work of helping others. I needed to cure myself before trying to cure others. For the first time I got up and prostrated before him and from that moment my life, mind and heart changed and I felt his unbounded Grace flowing over me. I will tell one or two things that happened later.

I was sitting on the Hill talking to Visvanathan, an old devotee¹ one afternoon and asked him what had happened to the house where Bhagavan was born. He said that he had no idea. I was shocked to hear this and told him that in Western countries the birthplaces of great men were preserved just as

they were left, and even more so that of Bhagavan should belong to us and be kept as a place of pilgrimage. I ran straight away to the office of the Sarvadhikari, Niranjanananda Swami² and asked him about it. He said that there was a school in the house. I asked him to write that very evening and say that I wanted to buy it. Now it is Ashram property and regular puja is performed there.

After this the Sarvadhikari asked me to go to Madras and see the Minister Sri Bhaktavatsalam about the possibility of getting railway connection to Tiruchuzi, Bhagavan's birthplace. I went but was shocked when I heard how much it would cost. I decided to leave it to Bhagavan and thought no more about it, but imagine my joy some years later when Sri Bhaktavatsalam became Chief Minister of Madras and the line was actually constructed. Tiruchuzi has now become a much more important town. Bhagavan's Grace is sufficient to accomplish anything, big or small, if one's entire life and soul are laid at his feet. He has brought about many seemingly impossible things for me.

I also had the grace of Bhagavan when Mr. Tarapore, a Parsi friend, took up my plan for renovating the Patala Linga, an underground cavern where Bhagavan had sat performing austerities as a youth when he first came to Tiruvannamalai. He did this beautifully at his own expense and Sri Rajagopalachari, the then Governor-General of India, came over to perform the opening ceremony. This also has now become a place of pilgrimage.

Before I close I must mention also the loving devotion of the Sarvadhikari and the strong faith and selfless service with which he worked. It is due to him that we have these whole magnificent Ashram buildings where formerly was nothing but bare ground.

¹ Author of the article on Sri Ganapathi Muni in this issue.—(EDITOR)

² For an account of whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of Jan. 1964.—(EDITOR)

"THIS"—AND ALL THAT

By WEI WU WEI

In dualistic language "I" just stands for the Latin "ego" which is a concept without any factual existence, i.e. a complex which must be resolved because its psychological presence constitutes bondage. But, used as a metaphysical term, it implies This-which-we-are as opposed to That-which-we-think-we-are but are not.

That which is sensorially perceptible is demonstrably only an image in mind and, as such, can have no nature of its own. But the sentience of every sentient being must have a centre via which its functioning is directed, this "centre" of each sentient object being as purely phenomenal as the sentient appearance. Such centre is devoid of volition, as of autonomy of any kind; it is, not, therefore, an "ego", and it cannot think self-consciously as "I".

Identification of This-which-we-are with each phenomenal object, in the process of objectifying this 'functional' centre, translates it as an individual "ego-self", and so produces a suppositional "entity".

A phenomenon is a manifestation, and therefore an aspect, of noumenon. Spontaneous phenomenal action is noumenal, and so-living is noumenal living. Such, then, is non-identified living. It is identification with a spurious (imagined) autonomous *entity* that is supposed to be born, to suffer, and to die, that incurs the process of Causality called *karma*, and causes the notion of being in bondage to arise.

Phenomena as such, having no entity to be bound, cannot be bound, but neither have they an entity to be free. Always it is the "entity" that is spurious, the phenomenon being what its name states — and appearance in mind, neither bound nor free.

The apparent problem, therefore, only concerns identification: it is identification

that produces the notion of bondage. Identification with a phenomenal object results in the suppositional concept of an autonomous entity, and that concept is taken to be a factual "self", whereas nothing of the kind exists, has ever existed, or ever could exist as a thing-in-itself, or as other than a concept in what is called "mind".

But identification with a phenomenal object as such is not *ipso facto* bondage, for such phenomenon has no "ens" and need not have any — as may be observed in the case of a disidentified Sage who appears to live as any other man "lives", at any rate to a casual observer.

It is only the superimposition of the elaborated concept of an autonomous self that is responsible for the notions of "karma" and "bondage", which are the effects of an apparent "volition".

II

Let us develop this understanding in greater detail. Noumenality has no need to identify itself with phenomenality, any more than an egg need be identified with an egg, nor need This-which-we-are identify itself with That-which-we-are, since their differentiation is one of objective appreciation only. But an identification of noumenality, not with phenomenality but with discriminated, or separated phenomena, entails the splitting into subject and object of phenomenality and the attribution of subjectivity to what is purely objective. That pseudo-subjectivity is attributed to the "functional" centre of each separate phenomenal object, and this produces the idea of an autonomous individual with an ego-self.

Otherwise expressed, phenomenality being integral in noumenality, it must be the dis-

crimination of phenomenality into separate phenomena possessed of both subjective and objective character that produces identification. Such identification, then, is the attribution of subjective function to the objectivisation of a phenomenal or "functional" centre in each such phenomenon, thereby creating an individual with a suppositious ego-self. In short, the functional focal point of a phenomenal objectivisation has been endowed with a suppositious personal subjectivity whereas its only subjectivity is its noumenality. This suppositional subjectivity is then objectified as an entity possessing full autonomy.

Identification of This-which-we-are with separate phenomenal objects which, without such identification, are simply our phenomenality as such, involves the objectivisation of each. In this process the "functional" centre comes to be seen as the centre of a suppositional individual with an ego-self, developing thereby a supposed entity where there is merely phenomenality functioning impersonally as subject and

object. That is to say, it functions subjectively and objectively in split-mind, accompanied by "space" and "time", as "mechanically" as the ticking of a clock.

Absolute-noumenality, manifesting via every sentient being, recognises no entity in the phenomenal cosmos, has no need of such, nor any function that such could fulfil. The existence of an autonomous, volitional entity would be incompatible with the functioning of *prajñā*, and the notion of such seems to be an aberration for which there is no place. An entity, therefore, is "a dream, an illusion, a bubble and a shadow", as the Buddha said in the Diamond Sutra, a breeze of phantasy that troubles the calm waters of mind without any possibility of effecting anything whatever of a factual character in the dream of phenomenal living.

NOTE: Yes, yes, quite so. What the Buddha so lucidly and I so obscurely have just been describing is — as you suspect — that which you *think* that you are.

TOGETHER AND APART

Translated by PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Muruganar*

Both male and female, far yet near,
Mountain-huge and atom-small
Pure Spirit He, whose sidelong glance
Has made me see
The Truth invisible
And hear
The dancing music of His feet.
For He has caught within His heart
And carries in His cosmic dance
This midget. What extravagance
Of grace, to hold me in this bliss,
Both mine and His,
Together and apart!

*For an introduction to whom see our issue of October, 1964.



The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by PROF. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

INTRODUCTION

The Vedic Hymns, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita are regarded as the *Prasthānatrayi* or 'threefold scriptures' of Hinduism. Of these the Gita is the most widely read and loved and has been most often translated. There is, however, to our knowledge, no very satisfactory rendering of it in English. To translate poetry is always a formidable task, and when the poetry is also scripture it becomes far more so, since every word has significance and should be adequately rendered. There are a number of 'literary' translations, from Edwin Arnold downwards, but all of them blur the clear lines of doctrine and give too vague

an indication of the meaning. In India a number of more literal translations have been made, but these are mostly in ungainly English, and even so the rendering is seldom precise and adequate. It is hoped in this translation, which is to be serialised in *The Mountain Path*, to combine fidelity with good English, but the first emphasis will be on fidelity, since no one is authorised to tamper with scripture.

The Gita is an episode in one of India's two great epic poems, the Mahabharata. This is a vast work, many times longer than the Homeric poems. It contains a wealth of mythology and much religious and ethical teaching but is mainly centred around the quarrel between the Pāṇḍavās and Kauravās

culminating in the Battle of Kurukshetra.¹ Briefly the story is this.

King Pandu had five sons who were accordingly known as the Pāṇḍavās. After his death his brother Dhritarashtra became king and brought up Pandu's five together with his own hundred sons. He was blind and weak and could not restrain his sons, especially the eldest of whom, Duryodana, was violent and treacherous. They plotted against the Pāṇḍavās, tricked them out of their heritage and drove them into exile. The final result of this was the great Battle of Kurukshetra in which most of the Aryan kings were aligned with one side or the other and the flower of Indian chivalry was destroyed.

This human cycle or manvantara is said to be divided into four ages or yugas of progressively diminishing excellence, equivalent to the ancient Western conception of the four ages of gold, silver, copper and iron. The Battle of Kurukshetra is held by some to mark the transition from the third age to the fourth, the kali-yuga or 'dark age' in which we now live.

Krishna, the Avatar or Divine Incarnation, was living at this time as Prince of Mathura. Both sides sought his alliance. He was bound by affection to the Pāṇḍavās and recognized their noble qualities, but he felt some obligation to the Kauravās also. Therefore, when both sides came to claim his alliance, he said that one could have his army while he himself would go with the other, but unarmed. The Kauravās chose his army, while Arjuna, the most famous of the Pāṇḍavās, chose Krishna himself to go with him as his charioteer. Those who placed material aid above spiritual thereby sealed their doom.

Just as the battle was beginning, Arjuna told Krishna to drive his chariot between the two armies. Seeing this mighty concourse gathered for mutual destruction, seeing more-over friends, relatives and revered elders on the side of the enemy as well as his own,

his heart failed him. He did not desire victory or dominion, he declared, if won by such slaughter. "Better for me were the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapon in hand, to slay me unarmed and unresisting."

Krishna, however, will have none of this non-violence. He explains to Arjuna that it is his duty as a kshatriya, a member of the warrior caste, to destroy evil and uphold righteousness. In this dramatic setting develops a complete exposition of the meaning and purpose of life and the paths men can tread to its fulfilment.

The story is supposed to be told to Dhritarashtra by Sanjaya who witnessed and overheard it all.

CHAPTER ONE

In this first chapter the stage is set. The two opposing armies are reviewed and then the despondency of Arjuna is described.

Why was the battlefield chosen as the stage for Arjuna's instruction? The choice has tremendous literary effect, but the explanation goes deeper than that. It shows vividly that the inner warfare is to be waged on the battlefield of life, not through withdrawal from life. Krishna might have instructed Arjuna in a cave far from distractions, but no: instead is chosen a setting where the teaching is immediately to be put into effect by combining the most strenuous outer activity with the right attitude of mind.

1

Said Dhritarashtra: "When Pandu's sons met mine for battle on the Field of Dharma, the Field of Kuru, tell me what happened, Sanjaya."

The word 'dharma' is left in Sanskrit as no single word translates it adequately. It implies uprightness or harmony, with its opposite 'adharma' as unrighteousness or disharmony. It is natural or divine law and thence comes to mean the action that is true to a man's nature and the religiously inspired social order of a community. Speaking of the individual, the Gita says (XVIII, 47): "Better one's own dharma though faultily performed than that of another though well performed. Doing the duty ordained by one's own nature one incurs no sin." That is

¹ 'The Field of Kuru', *kshetra* meaning 'field' and Kuru being the ancestor of both Pandavas and Kauravas.

to say that a man should act according to his own nature and the circumstances in which he is placed and not try to imitate another or play the role of another. Speaking of society it says (IV, 7): "Whenever dharma declines and adharma triumphs I manifest myself."

Dharma is, perhaps, the central concept of Hinduism. It is significant that it is the opening word of the Bhagavad Gita. The expression "Dharmakshetra, Kurukshetra" indicates that the battle of Kurukshetra was also a battle of righteousness against wrong-doing. In a deeper sense it implies that the battle is also the inner warfare of dharma against adharma that each man has to fight.

2

Said Sanjaya: "When Prince Duryodhana beheld the army of the Pandavas drawn up in battle order he approached his teacher and spoke thus:

Duryodhana was the eldest of the Kauravas, that is of the sons of Dhritarashtra. It was he who was mainly responsible for the war. His teacher was Drona, renowned instructor of both Kauravas and Pandavas in the art of war.

3

"Behold, Master, this grand army of the Pandavas marshalled by your able pupil Drupada.

4

"Here are archers mighty in battle, like Bhima and Arjuna, warriors such as Yuyudhama and Virata, here Drupada the Maharatha.

Bhima, one of the Pandava brothers and leader of their forces, was famous for his strength and prowess.

5

"Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana and the valiant King of Kasi, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Shaibya mighty among men.

Kasi is the modern Benares.

6

"The heroic Yudhamanyu and Uttamauja the brave; the son of Subhadra and those of Draupadi, all mighty charioteers,

7

Draupadi was the daughter of Drupada and joint wife of the five Pandavas. Her five sons took part in the battle.

7

"Know also, O best of the twice-born, who are foremost on our side and leaders of my army. Let me recite their names for you.

The twice-born are those of the upper castes, that is to say those who are eligible for initiation and spiritual guidance.

8

"Yourself and Bhishma, Karna and Kripa the vanquisher, Ashvatthama and Vikarna, and also Somadatta's son.

9

"And many other heroes that have pledged their lives for me, armed with diverse weapons, all well skilled in war.

10

"Unlimited this army of ours marshalled by Bhishma, while that of theirs, marshalled by Bhima, is limited.

11

"Therefore stand firm, all in your ranks and places, and all support Bhishma."

12

To rejoice him then Bhishma the Mighty, eldest of the Kauravas, Bhishma the Grand-sire, let forth a roar like a lion and sounded his conch.

13

Suddenly conches and kettle-drums, tabors, drums and horns blared forth and stupendous was the noise.

14

Then Krishna and Arjuna also, seated in their great chariot drawn by white horses, blew their heavenly conches.

The names actually used are 'Madhava' for Krishna and 'Pandava' for Arjuna.

15

Krishna sounded Panchajanya and Arjuna Devadatta; Bhima of the mighty deeds sounded his great conch Poundra.

The name used for Krishna here is 'Hrishiksha', meaning 'He of the splendid hair' and for Arjuna 'Dhananjaya' meaning 'Conqueror of wealth'.

Panchajanya, Krishna's conch, is so called because it was made from the bones of Pancha, a demon he had slain. 'Devadatta', the name of Arjuna's, means 'God-given'.

The name used for Bhima is 'Vrikodara' meaning 'Wolf-Belly', on account of his huge appetite.

16

Prince Yudhisthira son of Kunti sounded Anantavijaya; Nakula and Sahadeva sounded Sughosha and Manipushpaka.

Yudhisthira was the eldest of the Pandavas. He and the next two brothers, Arjuna and Bhima, were the sons of Kunti, Pandu's senior wife. The twins Nakula and Sahadeva were the sons of his junior wife, Madri.

17, 18

The King of Kasi, great archer, Shikhandi the Maharatha, Dhristadumnya, Virata and Satyaki the invincible, Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, O Lord of the earth, and the stout armed son of Subhadra, these from all sides sounded their conches.

19

That tumultuous uproar, resounding through heaven and earth, rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons.

20, 21

Then Arjuna, son of Pandu, he of the Hanuman banner, seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra marshalled for battle, took up his bow just as the fighting began and spoke thus, great king, to Krishna of the Splendid Hair: "Drive my chariot between the two armies, Achyuta,

'Achyuta', a name for Krishna, means 'firm' or 'immovable'.

22

"So that I can see those gathered here for war, with whom I must fight now that the battle begins.

23

"Let me gaze upon those who have assembled here to serve in battle the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra."

24, 25

Sanjaya continued: Hearing Arjuna speak thus, O Bharata, Krishna drove his splendid chariot between the two hosts, facing Bhishma and Drona and all the kings, and said: "Behold these Kurus assembled here, O Son of Pritha."

The name used for Arjuna here is 'Gudakesha' and for Krishna 'Hrishikesha'.

26, 27

Then Arjuna son of Pritha saw fathers and grandfathers, teachers, uncles and brothers, sons and grandsons, fathers-in-law, friends and companions drawn up for battle in the two armies. When Arjuna son of Kunti saw all these kinsmen standing thus arrayed.

28, 29

Great compassion came over him and sorrowfully he said: "Seeing these kinsfolk of mine drawn up for battle, Krishna, my limbs droop, my mouth is parched, my body trembles and my hair stands on end;

30

"The bow Gandiva slips from my hand, my skin is burning, my mind reels and I cannot stand.

31

"I see ill omens, Keshava, nor do I foresee any good from slaying my kinsfolk in battle.

32

"I desire not victory, Krishna, nor dominion nor pleasures. Of what use to us is dominion, Govinda, or pleasure or even life?

33

"Those for whose sake I desired dominion, pleasure and enjoyment are gathered here for battle, staking their wealth and life,

34

"Those teachers, fathers and sons, grandfathers and uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other kinsfolk.

35

"These I do not wish to kill, O Slayer of Madhu, even though killed myself, not for lordship of the three worlds, much less for the sake of this earth.

The three worlds of heaven and earth and the intermediate zone.

36

"What joy would remain to us, Janardana, after slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra? Only sin would accrue to us from the slaying of these evil-doers.

37

"Therefore it does not behove us to slay our kinsfolk, the sons of Dhritarashtra, O Madhava. How can we be happy after killing our own people?

38, 39

"Even though these, their minds clouded by greed, see no evil in destruction of family and no sin in treachery to friends, should not we have the wisdom to turn away from this sin, Janardana, and to see evil in the destruction of the family?

40

"On the destruction of a family its ancient dharma perishes, and when its dharma perishes adharmā overtakes the whole family.

41

"When adharmā prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt; with corruption of the women comes intermingling of the castes, O Descendent of the Vrishnis.

42

"This intermingling brings the family and its destroyers down to hell; their ancestors also fall, deprived of their offerings of rice and water.

Arjuna here maintains that destroying the moral standards and traditional practices of a family causes the downfall not only of future generations but past also, since those ancestors who have not attained final Liberation are still in need of ritual prayers for the dead, of which they will now be deprived.

43

"Thus the evil deeds of those who destroy families lead through the intermingling of castes to subversion of the dharma both of race and family.

44

"We have heard it said, Janardana, that hell is the abode of those whose family dharma is subverted.

45

"Alas, what a great sin we are resolved upon, to slay our kinsfolk through desire for the pleasure of dominion!

46

"Better indeed for me were the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapon in hand, to slay me unarmed and unresisting."

47

Sanjaya continued: "Having spoken thus on the battlefield, Arjuna cast aside his bow and arrow and sank down on the chariot seat, overwhelmed with grief."

*Here ends the first chapter, the 'YOGA OF ARJUNA'S GRIEF',
in the Blessed Bhagavad Gita, an Upanishad of the
wisdom of the Absolute, a dialogue between
Sri Krishna and Arjuna.*

THE SAGE OF ARUNACHALA

By SWAMI ANANTA of Mauritius

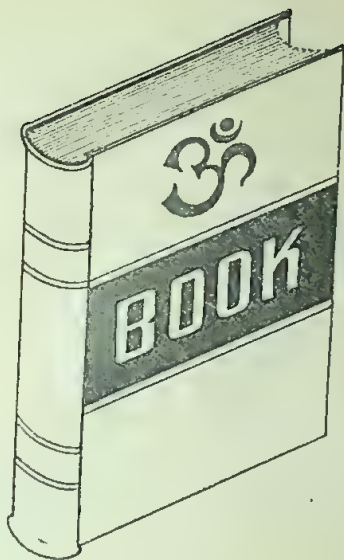
It is true he taught thro' silence,
But never was silence more eloquent,
From his luminous eyes flowed
Cascades of soothing words
To guide us, clear our doubts,
Affirm us in our sadhana.

It is true they dubbed him a gyani.
No matter. The unfeeling can never sense.
Was there ever a greater lover,
A bhakta so madly immersed
In the object of his adoration?
Bhagwan's eyes are Radha's own.

Eyes overflowing with such love,
Divine love which sustains,
Not for a matter of an hour but
Consistently thro' the years,
Those eyes brimming with His Light
Thrilled all who came for his darshan.

Eyes which still mould us as they gaze
From paintings, the immortal Lover's eyes,
Eyes which love and never question,
Help but never chastise,
Mildly encouraging all the time,
E'en my heavenly Father's eyes.

His message sounds simple,
Yet his tapasya was Herculean.
Like some mighty giant of old
This village youth walked with maturity
The narrow way. From the first the approach
Was masterly, the calm, and noble countenance,
The lofty gave, the complete immersion in Self,
All proclaimed him Avatar,
The Lord Himself come to bless us with His Presence,
Sri Krishna fulfilling His promise.



REVIEWS

SHAMANISM, ARCHAIC TECHNIQUE OF ECSTASY. By Mircea Eliade. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, Pp. 610, Price 45s.)

Shamanism is an initiation and technique for attaining at will states of ecstasy which involve experiences of higher and lower worlds. It also confers powers of defence against sickness and psychic and spirit attacks, so that the shaman is the spiritual defender of his community. It is not a religion, being only a mode of training for an elite, like yogic or tantric paths in India. It can therefore co-exist with a religion for the whole community. It must be considered less far-reaching than the type of path that aims at Moksha, since it stops short at increasing the powers of the individual and does not in general envisage the Supreme Identity. On the other hand, it goes farther than those modern versions of religion which consist of mere belief, for its adepts go beyond belief to experience.

Shamanism has been mainly observed in Siberia and North Central Asia, but in his compendious and fascinating study of it Mircea Eliade shows unmistakable signs of its present or former prevalence over most parts of the world—the Arctic, North and South America, Australia, Germanic Europe, with considerable vestiges in India, Tibet and China. Moreover he shows it to go back to remote prehistoric antiquity, at least to the people who made the paleolithic rock paintings of some 25,000 years ago and possibly much farther. "It is indubitable that the celestial ascent of the shaman... is a survival, profoundly modified and sometimes degenerated, of the archaic religious ideology centred on faith in a celestial

Supreme Being and belief in concrete communications between heaven and earth." (p. 505)

The words "sometimes degenerated" are significant, and indeed the "sometimes" could well be discarded. Historians of religion have long abandoned the idea, based on a blind belief in progress and evolution, that monotheism was a late growth from an earlier animism and polytheism and found the opposite to be true: that an original belief in a single Supreme Being later gets overgrown by the cult of gods or spirits who seem more accessible for the answering of prayers. While showing this to have occurred in shamanistic doctrine also, Mircea Eliade goes farther and tells us that in practice as well as theory all shamanistic traditions admit degeneracy and recognize the greater potency of the ancients. For instance, the use of intoxicants for producing a trance-like state is everywhere admitted to be a late degeneracy.

Altogether this scholarly and attractive work builds up a very different and far more authentic picture of ancient man than the savage whom an earlier generation of materialistic theorists had imagined in their own likeness.

DOCTRINE AND ARGUMENT IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: By Ninian Smart. (Allen and Unwin, Pp. 255, Price 37s. 6d.)

Indian philosophical systems are theoretical bases for spiritual training. To study them apart from this, as mere academic theory, would be like trying to portray a man by describing the clothes he is wearing. Ninian Smart sees this more

clearly than most Western commentators. He explains the traditional philosophical systems, both orthodox and heterodox, in association with the systems of training they sponsor. This makes his presentation more living than most such attempts by Western scholars. Added to that, he obviously has immense erudition without ever displaying it or becoming clogged by it. Instead he sets forth his subject with remarkable lucidity.

This lucidity, however, is greatly impaired by his abstention from the use of Sanskrit words. Technical terms in any language have overtones of meaning which are lost in translation. For instance, the implications of the word 'Purusha' meaning literally 'man', 'person' or 'Spirit' (as contrasted with 'nature' or 'substance') are quite different from those of the word 'soul', by which he renders it. And the implication of exile and hardship in the word 'samsara' is completely lost in 'cycle'. And as for 'guna', the translation 'strand-substance' is downright misleading, even more so than 'stress' or 'tendency' would be, though neither of these would be adequate. Indeed the reader is put to greater effort in remembering what each such word is supposed to imply than he would be in recognizing the Sanskrit words they misrepresent.

The greatest weakness of the work, however, is that although it links up the philosophical systems with the spiritual disciplines, it shows no understanding or appreciation of the states or experiences to which these disciplines lead. It, therefore fails really to come to life. While providing a useful guide for the academic student (except for the faulty terminology it employs), it is of no use to the spiritual aspirant.

THE TIGER'S CAVE: By Trevor Leggett. (Rider & Co., London, Pp. 191, Price 25s.)

"If you want a tiger's cub you must go into a tiger's cave" goes a Zen saying. Most of this book is a commentary on the 'Heart Sutra' by a Japanese Zen abbot who has clearly not acquired the tiger's cub. It is sound and sensible nevertheless, but without the sparkle and paradox so many Zen writers indulge in.

Next follows an autobiographical study by Hakuin, the 18th Century Zen Master whose 'Song of Meditation', as translated by Gary Snyder, we published in our issue of April 1964. It is concerned with Taoist technicalities which are almost meaningless in any other tradition. Pure Zen, like pure Advaita, is an open secret for those who can understand, but the technical paths, Her-

metic, Tantric and other, are in code and have to be deciphered. Hakuin is by no means the only Master who has attained the simple by way of the intricate.

A few other short translations at the end are more accessible. Obviously true Zen. The best item is the story of a samurai in the time of the civil war who occupied a Zen monastery that was thought to be favouring the other side. Finding the abbot sitting calmly in meditation, he flourished his sword and proclaimed: "Do you realize that you have to do with a man who could run you through without batting an eyelid?" To which the abbot quietly replied: "And do you realize that you have to do with a man who could be run through without batting an eyelid?" The samurai put up his sword and departed crest-fallen.

KUMBHA, INDIA'S AGELESS FESTIVAL: By Dilip Kumar Roy and Indira Devi. (Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7, Pp. 204, Price Rs. 2.50.)

India's Kumbha Mela is a festival that occurs only once in twelve years, drawing a vast concourse of pilgrims to Prayag to bathe on the auspicious days at the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the third river, now subterranean or invisible, the Saraswati. Apart from lay pilgrims, crowds of sadhus gather there—to meet one another and exchange views and experiences, to worship and to be worshipped. Many of them are failures who have derailed on the path, many frauds who have never set foot on it, but who is to say that some few among them are not genuine and capable of disseminating light and grace? That is what Dilip Kumar Roy, the renowned singer and mystic, and his disciple Indira Devi set out to investigate at the last Kumbha Mela, which took place in 1954; and among the enormous but regulated crowds of some six millions they did indeed find some such.

Their book about it was written earlier than *The Flute Calls Still*, reviewed in an earlier issue, but has reached us later. Writing separate chapters, they give a vivid impression of this tremendous gathering, the sea of heads wading out into the river, the varied types, the important visitors, the babel of tongues, the sadhus' colony, the many craving to worship or be worshipped. There are also convincing account of their meetings and discussions with a sadhu of regal simplicity in whom they detected true achievement.

Dilip Kumar Roy is perhaps overly concerned with meeting the objections of the rationalistic cynic. Indeed a large part of the book is taken up with such a dialogue, in which one feels that one tendency of his mind is perhaps confronting another. What convinces him is not argument but experience — direct experience of the transcendental and human experience of those radiant souls who are in touch with the transcendental.

✓
THE SAINTS OF INDIA: By Swami Tattwananda. (Oxford Book Co., Park St., Calcutta-16, Pp. 288, Price Rs. 10.50.)

Swami Tattwananda gives brief biographies of 40 Indian saints, all Hindus and mostly Vaishnavites, that is bhaktas, although the book opens with the founder of Jainism and closes with Sri Ramana Maharshi, both of whom could rather be called Jnanis and Advaitins. Incidentally, in writing of Sri Ramana Maharshi he makes the grave mistake of saying that he left home at the age of 16 in quest of Realization. Actually, young as he was, he had already attained Realization.

From Tirthankar, about the 5th Century B.C. the book jumps to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, in the 15th Century A.D. From here on the Vaishnava saints are described in geographical rather than chronological order. The omissions are remarkable. For instance, neither Sri Chaitanya nor Sri Ramiakrishna is included, although they are two of the most famous Bengali bhaktas.

This is the sort of book that many will like to dip into. To read it through as a whole is to see with what powerful continuity the current of Hindu spirituality flowed on beneath the surface turmoil of Muslim and British conquest and internal strife.

VEDANTA DICTIONARY: By Ernest Wood. (Peter Owen, Pp. 225, Price 25s.)

Ernest Wood follows up his dictionaries of Zen and Yoga with another efficient one on Vedanta. Certain philosophical questions are inevitably raised and not all will agree with his handling of some of them. For instance, his definition of 'samadhi' does not cover all possibilities. Nevertheless it is a painstaking and useful work. The basic standpoint of Vedanta is excellently defined under the heading 'ambition'. "No one could be more ambitious, probably, than the Vedantist, who aims at union with Brahman or God, the one and only, one and absolute being. Yet it is not per-

sonal ambition, for John Smith or Kamala Devi will never attain that union. It is the consciousness that they are and really know themselves to be — did they but give proper attention to the matter — who will attain. The erroneous temporary conception of oneself will then be seen to be only a temporary tool or instrument for worldly (vyavaharika) living."

A SOUL'S BLOSSOMS: By Pranav. (The Book World, Beach, Trivandrum-7, Pp. 27, Price Rs. 4.)

Nearly all poems written in English by Indian writers are far too facile both in metre and rhyme. Some of those in the present little volume are quite exceptional in their restraint and their mastery of genuine English rhythms. Many of them are songs of praise and homage to Bhagavan, as is the following:

I KNEW OF THEE

Not in the crowd
I saw Thee,
But in the hush
Of my heart.
Not from men
Of great learning
I heard of Thee,
But from the whisper
Of the voice from
A profound
Depth in me.
I got a glimpse of Thee
On a solitary hill-top
Crowned by the gold
Of the setting sun.
Whenever I sat mute
And my thoughts
Made their adieu,
My Lord, I knew
Thou wert within me.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

FOUNDATIONS OF TIBETAN MYSTICISM: By Lama Anagarika Govinda. (Rider & Co., London, Pp. 310, Price 30s.)

"While my eyes were immersed in the golden depths of the Maharshi's eyes, something happened which I dare describe only with the greatest reticence and humility, in the shortest and simplest words, according to truth. The dark complexion of his body transformed itself slowly into white. This white body became more and more

luminous, as if lit up from within, and began to radiate. This experience was so astonishing that, while trying to grasp it consciously and with clear thought, I immediately thought of suggestion, hypnosis, etc. I therefore made certain 'controls', like looking at my watch, taking out my diary and reading in it, for which purpose I had first to put on my spectacles etc. Then I looked at the Maharshi, who had not diverted his glance from me; and with the same eyes, which a moment ago were able to read some notes in my diary, I saw him sitting on the tiger-skin as a luminous form.

It is not easy to explain this state, because it was so simple, so natural, so unproblematic. How I would wish to remember it with full clarity in the hour of my death!"

Quoting this entry from the *Asian Diaries* of Baron Dr. von Veltheim-Ostrau, the author of this notable book describes the radiation that emanates from a body that has undergone spiritual transformation, a feature that is characteristic of the Tibetan Yoga on which this work is an exhaustive exposition.

Lama Anagarika Govinda has had first-hand experience of the practical side of this Yoga and his extensive studies in the original works on the subject have combined to place his writings in a class apart from the others that have been appearing during the last five decades and more. The present work, particularly, is a classic and his treatment of some of the essentials of this tradition, viz., Mantra, Mandala, Chakras, Inner Fire etc., is not only brilliant but unique inasmuch as he brings out certain practical truths that are lost sight of in most expositions of this type.

Discussing the question whether the Buddhist Tantras derive from the Indian or the Indian Tantras have been influenced by the Buddhist, the writer expresses his view that, by and large, the two pursued their independent lines, the Indian Tantra emphasising the Shakti (Power) aspect and the Buddhist (in Tibet) concentrating upon the Prajna (Knowledge) aspect of the Divine. He is inclined to agree with the scholars who hold that the Buddhist Tantras are older and their practices did influence the developments in Indian Tantrism.

He makes it a point to underline a commonly neglected feature of the practical teaching of the Buddha: that Yoga as it has developed from the original Teaching does not turn its face away from life, from form, into some Nothingness but includes in its scheme of Illumination the physical body and seeks to embrace all Life in its vision.

His chapters on the Five Dhyani Buddhas and their role in the spiritual transformation of every man on earth are breath-taking.

Half of the book is devoted to an exposition of the key Mantra of this Yoga-discipline, *Om Mani Padme Hum*, and in the process, the fundamentals of the science of Mantra are expounded most rationally. Incidentally, he warns against a materialistic interpretation of the principle of mantric vibrations and points out how it is the spiritual attitude and tapas-shakti (instinct in the initiation) that are really decisive in the matter. The precise manner of projecting oneself into the universal consciousness through the syllables of this Mantra is sketched out in profound terms; so too the graded visualisation of the Deities while dwelling upon the Mantra.

This is a work of basic importance in the study of the Tantras—of whatever religion—and deserves to be more widely known and studied than it has been so far. The writing here proceeds from living and hence its peculiar power and spell.

✓ THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE MANDALA: By Prof. Giuseppe Tucci. (Rider & Co., London, Pp. 147, Price 25s.)

If the *Foundations* gives the Tibetan approach to the Reality through Sound, the present book by Dr. Tucci traces the Way through Form. The problem is the same: how is the individual to win back his lost identity with the Divine? Or as the author puts it, how best to arrive at reintegration?

Dr. Tucci is well conversant with both branches of the Tantra, the Indian and the Buddhist, and draws parallels between the two at every stage in his study. He describes how from the Absolute issued this Creation through the Five intermediary self-formulations—whether we call them the Five Buddhas or the Five Great Tattvas, Shiva, Shakti, Sadasiva, etc., the truth is the same—and organised itself in groups of Five, five elements, five airs, five directions, etc., etc. but around One centre existing in each creature. Having arrived at the nadir of fragmentation, the *disintegration*, the individual seeks its way back to its Source, to re-integrate itself. And towards this end the Tibetan adepts have perfected the institution of the Mandala. What exactly is a Mandala?

A Mandala is a diagrammatic representation of the configuration of the subtle forces in Creation which keep the Universe going. Each detail of it stands for a nodal point in the constitution of the Cosmos and by appropriate steps of concen-

tration, meditation and evocation on it, it is possible for man to project himself in the determinative scheme of the creative Forces and register a transition from his ordinary human state to a divine status and, if he would, gain complete identity with the Absolute that overtops the Creation figuratively rendered in the Mandala.

The learned writer has had personal experience of this tradition and leaves no point untouched in the course of his terse exposition of the subject. His analysis of the symbolism of the Mandala, its various parts, the method of forming one and the very interesting means adopted by the teachers in Tibet to determine the nature of the Mandala suited to the aspirant, are highly instructive. The last chapter describing how the Mandala can be visualised in one's own body, to the last detail, and how it can be used to train and convert one's consciousness into its divine counterpart is very valuable.

The processes of ascent and descent, the importance of personal effort in sadhana, the futility of suppression of tendencies in one's nature, the necessity of transfiguration, the indispensability of a sound physical base in the body, the limitations of the intellect *vis a vis* the soul—these are some of the topics touched upon in a manner that could be helpful to any sadhaka of whatever persuasion. For after all is said, the Quest is the same for every one. And rightly understood, the *Mandala* has a universal significance. As the writer concludes:

"When, then, the Indian or Tibetan artist designs a *mandala*, he is not obeying the arbitrary command of caprice. He is following a definite tradition which teaches him how to represent, in a particular manner, the very drama of his soul. He does not depict on a *mandala* the cold images of an iconographical text. . . . He gives form to that world he feels surging within him and he sees it spread out before his eyes, no longer the invisible and unrestrainable master of his soul, but a serene symbolic representation which reveals to him the secret of things and of himself. This complicated juxtaposition of images, their symmetrical arrangement, this alternation of calm and of menacing figures, is the open book of the world and of Man's own spirit."

✓ THE SERPENT POWER: By Sir John Woodroffe. Seventh edition. (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17, Price Rs. 30)

That *The Serpent Power* is again available will be glad tidings to many in India and abroad who

have been waiting for it, like a friend who bitterly complained that in the whole of Israel he could find only one old tattered copy of the book and asked why it could not be made available more freely. This demand for the book is not surprising for it is the most mature and finished work of Sir John Woodroffe who introduced the West—and even the intelligentsia of the India of today—to the ancient tradition and lore of the Tantra and brought to the fore the great Truths of God, Nature and Man it enshrines. Till the advent of this scholar-judge on the scene, all that was known of Indian spirituality to the modern mind was the Vedanta and a wrong perspective of the Vedas. No one admitted the Tantras into this field of study as they were held to be remnants of a superstitious and ignorant—if not perverted—past. It was given to Sir John to clear this mist of misunderstanding and neglect and to reclaim the treasure that lay concealed under the debris of overgrown ritualist practices and ill-understood formulae. With the collaboration of indigenous scholarship and help of genuine practitioners in the line, he unearthed and brought out a number of editions of old Sanskrit texts. He wrote introductions, translated the texts, annotated them, lectured on their contents and devoted his whole life to the resuscitation of this great Science. And if today it is widely recognised that the Tantra has a philosophy and a discipline which is more catholic and understanding of human nature and its possibilities than the Vedanta, that it is the one system which is free from dogma and offers itself for verification at every step, that it is unique inasmuch as it harmonises the claims of both father Heaven and mother Earth on man and therefore the most acceptable in the modern context, the credit for being the pioneer should go to Sir John Woodroffe.

And of all the large number of books he wrote and edited, *The Serpent Power* stands out as the most important, a worthy monument to the industry, perceptive intelligence, wisdom and maturity of the soul of Sir John. The work is built round two Sanskrit texts: (1) *shat-chakra-nirupana*, which forms the sixth chapter of the *Tattva-chintamani* of Purnanandaswami who lived four hundred years ago in Bengal; and (2) *paduka-panchaka* of unknown authorship. Both of them deal with the organisation of the Chakras or Lotuses which are the Centres of vital dynamism in the human system and which are activated and utilised in the path of Yoga that is the soul of the Tantra.

Apart from the Sanskrit text and the commentary thereon by another authority on the subject,

Kalicharana, the volume contains the full translation in English of both the text and the commentary, by Sir John Woodroffe, his elaborate notes based on other commentaries on the works, and—what is more important—a magnificent Introduction running into 300 pages giving a lucid and detailed account of the philosophy and practice of the Kundalini Yoga that is the subject-matter of the text.

The Supreme Consciousness as it is, the Consciousness in its embodiment in the universe and the individual, the centres of connection between the individual and the Universal Consciousness, the means to activate them, the process of developing the individual human consciousness into the cosmic and transcendent divine Consciousness—are the fundamental topics that are dwelt upon. There is much else of interest: differences between the location of the Chakras according to the old tradition of the Tantra and the visualisation of the Theosophists; the famous correspondence between Sir John and his Indian collaborator and friend Prof. Pramathanatha Mukherji (now Swami Pratyagatmananda) on the question whether, when the Kundalini is awakened and rises up, she leaves the base entirely or only partially; etc., etc.

Enriched by the addition of eight colour-plates illustrating the different lotuses and nine half-tone blocks showing the *asanas* and *mudras* mentioned in the book, this Volume is a capital production.

M. P. PANDIT.

✓ **KULARNAVA TANTRA:** Annotated translation by M. P. Pandit, with an introduction by Sir John Woodroffe. (Ganesh & Co., Madras, Pp. 357, Price Rs. 25.)

The *Kularnava Tantra* is one of the authoritative texts of the much traduced Kaula school of sadhana. It is said to have originally contained a hundred thousand verses, although only some two thousand verses arranged in seventeen chapters now survive. There have been other translations but the present one is preeminent for its free, clear translation and excellent selection from textual variants as well as for its admirable printing and get-up. It is further improved by a valuable introduction taken from the writings of Sir John Woodroffe. A valuable appendix gives a clear explanation of the many technical terms used in the book, thereby making the text more intelligible.

The Kaula sadhana has had many detractors through the ages. Even apart from modern Western-educated Hindus, many pandits from the

time of Shankara onwards have inveighed against this path without taking the trouble to make a careful study of it or of the texts on which it is based. However, its goal is unexceptionable: that is realization of one's identity with Being in its aspect of Becoming. The path also is in no way objectionable if rightly understood. The strict advaitin rejects the objective world as illusion, but the tantric accepts it as a means of sadhana, enjoying it not as an objective reality in itself but as a manifestation of the Divine and a path to the Divine. On the Kaula path the sakta approaches his goal like a *veera* or hero by enjoying creation in its three modes or *gunas* of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. But while enjoying it he remains aloof from it, as only a hero can. He holds fast to the understanding that everything seen is in truth a manifestation of the seer of it. But the adoption of this sadhana is only for the few, the real heroes who can use and enjoy the beauties of nature without becoming enslaved by them. Indeed a perusal of the qualifications required of the initiate and the restrictions imposed on the ritual of enjoyment will show that few are capable of the Kaula sadhana and remove any prejudice against those who are.

Unfortunately the spirit of the age is against this kind of sadhana. Still the publisher must be congratulated for the spirit of true culture which alone could induce him to bring out this account of a lost method of seeking realization.

KRISHNA BHIKSHU.

✓ **STUDIES IN THE TANTRAS AND THE VEDA.** By M. P. Pandit. (Ganesh & Co., Madras, Pp. 146, Price Rs. 6.)

The book reviews by the learned writer M. P. Pandit collected together in this volume are worth preserving in their own right. One of them, for instance, brings out clearly the Vedic origin of the Tantras. It explains the theory of the Yōga of cosmic energy which Tantra is. Tantric yoga, indeed, comprises a wide range of techniques including *asanas*, *pranayama*, *bandha*, *mudra*, *meditation*, *japa*, *shakti upasana*, etc. Its distinctive feature is that it rejects the escapist asceticism of some forms of yoga, preferring to face Nature whole and master it. The author further brings out clearly the significance of Tantric rituals such as *pancha makara* and *shadchakra*.

Among varied and interesting chapters, it is very good that the author has one on Raurava Agama, for that is the very mainspring of Siva Jnana Bodham and Divya Tantra which leads to

a polarity of life in Siva-Shakti consciousness. We also have to thank the author for much valuable information on the Gayatri and Purusha Suktas and Nivida from the Rig Veda with the original text in Devanagari. Altogether this collection of studies is a very welcome addition to the growing body of literature on Tantrism.

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI.

GURU PREMAMRIT: By Swami Muktananda. (Shree Gurudev Ashram, P.O. Vajreswari, Dist. Thana, Maharashtra. Pp. 23. Price 60 Paise.)

Guru Bhakti is one of the recognized forms of bhakti marga. Swami Muktananda, successor to the late Swami Nityananda, gives an eloquent exposition of it in this little booklet.

Writing in simple language which obviously springs from his own deep experience, he shows how the devotee by first concentrating all his heart and mind on the beloved Guru, gradually comes to see him in all living beings and pervading the whole universe, until he is led through love and surrender to the experience of absolute non-duality.

Lest we should be tempted to regard this as an easy short cut for those who have little inclination to subject themselves to the rigorous discipline imposed by other paths, the author reminds us that whole-hearted concentration on the Guru automatically imposes its own discipline requiring constant effort and is not gained in a day. Guru Bhakti is not 'roses all the way' but the true devotee, accepting all as by the Grace of Gurudev, delights in the thorns no less than the fragrant petals. He may think that the stern practice of vairagya is not for him but he achieves it all the same.

Western readers who may be predisposed to consider this form of sadhana strange and perhaps even open to question are particularly recommended to read this simple, warm-hearted little exposition of it. It is well translated from the original Hindi by Dr. Kokila.

R. ROSE.

FROM LITERATURE TO RELIGION: An Autobiography. By D. S. Sarma (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, Pp. 232, Price Rs. 6.)

For many years a highly respected Professor in Presidency College, Madras, then at the height of its glory, Prof. D. S. Sarma counted among his friends and colleagues Mark Hunter, R. M. Statham, H. C. Papworth, S.E. Runganatham and

S. Radhakrishnan (all of whom became Knights later), not to mention two Mahamahopadhyayas. Later, as Principal of a Government College and of two private colleges, he set a much-needed example of rectitude in administration. On the teaching of English, especially through written work, on the responsibilities of Hostel Wardens, and on the relationship of principals to manage-ments, he has much of value to say.

But our primary interest in this work relates to his persistent and, on the whole, successful efforts through lectures and books to spread among students and the general public a sound knowledge of Hinduism, its scriptures and philosophy, its saints and sages, its history and development. True to Indian tradition, he would base religion on reason as well as authority and experience and he would welcome and utilize modern knowledge and progress in science. He has no patience with J. Krishnamurti's summary dismissal of all institutions. In fact, he holds that religion is the continuation and fulfilment of our everyday life, of artistic experience, scientific discovery and social service. The result of the spiritual experiences of prophets and seers, who belong to the present as well as the past and who reveal the unity behind the multiplicity of phenomenal existence, religion is a social art and a spiritual science which can transform individuals and society by making them grow in a vertical dimension towards the infinite.

The interview with Bhagavan which gave rise to Prof. Sarma's well-known essay on "A Great Jnana-Yogin of Modern India" (*The Hindu Standpoint*, M.L.J. Press, Madras-4) is reported at pp. 148-50 of the book under review and it contains the declaration:

"Sadhana implies an object to be gained, and the means of gaining it. What is there to be gained which we do not already possess?.... The self is realized not by one's doing something, but by one's refraining from doing anything, by remaining still and being simply what one really is."

PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN.

HIDDEN RICHES, TRADITIONAL SYMBOLISM FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO BLAKE. By Desiree Hirst. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, Pp. 348, Price 42s.)

The neo-paganism of the Renaissance that has been so much written about is far from being the whole picture. Miss Hirst shows in this fascinating study that there was also a strong wave of mysticism based largely on neo-Platonic, Pythagorean

rean and Cabbalistic symbolism. Profuse illustrations of the complex symbolism used add still further to the value of the book. There was even a suspicion that behind the philosophy of Grace lay the deeper profundity of Egypt and India and a readiness to recognize the basic truth of all religions. "This movement was pursued as much by churchmen as by anyone else. Its whole impulse was Christian piety. Though the speculations of Pico or a. Giorgio, a Nicholas of Cusa or Egidio, were daring, they were put forward in a spirit of complete loyalty to the Church." (p. 41). In Catholic Europe the movement was smothered (although the author overlooks this fact) by the Counter-Reformation. It reached its greatest profundity in the German Protestant mystic Jacob Boehme; and in Protestant England it continued right through the 17th and 18th Centuries with Robert Fludd, the Cambridge Platonists, William Law and many others, to have a final flowering in the early 19th Century in the symbolical poems and art of William Blake. To any interested in the long struggle of mysticism against encroaching Western materialism this is a most informative book. It is marred unfortunately by a glib 'Conclusion' in which the author plays the schoolma'am, putting the neo-Platonists and mystics in their places, but in spite of that it is well worth its price.

✓ **SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE:**
By Joel S. Goldsmith. (Allen and Unwin,
Pp. 235. Price 15s.)

"Christ may be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but if he be not born anew within your own heart, you remain eternally forlorn," said the German mystic Angelus Silesius. Similarly Joel Goldsmith, in this illumined work, expounds the symbolical meaning of Biblical stories and sayings from both Old and New Testament. This symbolism does not exclude their historical truth but, as he says, is of profounder importance. "The stories of Moses, Jesus, Paul and John are only of value to you when you discover their relationship to your life" (p. 18). In fact he goes still further to point out the symbolical value not only of scriptural stories but of the events and circumstances of your own life, as reflections of your inner state. "There is no external change without an internal development" (p. 52). And conversely: "Whatever we take into our consciousness and make a part of our consciousness

becomes externalised in some form of human experience." (p. 111-112).

Like all Joel Goldsmith's books, this one also proclaims the simple, universal truth of Advaita, that "I and my Father are One", in ordinary language, avoiding philosophical complexities. It is a profound and beautiful book with a scriptural-quality about it.

SAGITTARIUS.

OBJECTIONS TO ROMAN CATHOLICISM:

Edited with an introduction by M de la Be-
doyere. (Constable, London. Pp. 184, Price
18s.)

Most people are aware that important changes are taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, but few probably realise how profound and far-reaching they are. When Pope John summoned the Vatican Council he said that his purpose was 'to give back to the face of the Church of Jesus Christ the splendour and the pure and simple lines of its birth and to present it as the divine Founder made it'. It is this drama of the renewal of the inner life of the Church, of its interior spirit, which is being enacted in the Vatican Council to-day and if it still falls short of its objective, it cannot be denied that an astonishing transformation is taking place.

One way of expressing what is taking place is to say that the Vatican Council marks the end of the 'Constantinian era' in the Church. When the Emperor Constantine became a Christian and Christianity instead of being a persecuted sect became the established religion of the Roman Empire, it undoubtedly brought with it great advantages; the Church entered into an alliance with the world, and was largely responsible for moulding the civilisation of Europe which came into being in the next thousand years. But it also brought great disadvantages: it meant that every kind of credulity and superstition began to find a place in Christianity and what was perhaps more serious, the lust for power and wealth began to invade the Church. Movements of Reform which attempted to purify the Church have taken place constantly — the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century were but the culmination of many similar movements — but the need for reform is always present, and this is what the Vatican Council is now attempting.

One of the most significant signs of this new spirit in the Church is the spirit of self-criticism which is awakening everywhere. A good example of this is the book 'Objections to Roman

Catholicism' by a group of English lay people, which has already had a sensational effect in England. The book is not outstandingly good, but it is valuable as a sign of the kind of criticism which is being leveled at the Church by loyal and devoted members of it and not, as so often in the past, by hostile critics. The charges against the Church are basically three; the encouragement of credulity and superstition — defined as 'any belief or practice inspired by an unworthy view of God' — which is the subject of the first chapter; Worldliness, the subject of the second chapter; and Authoritarianism, the subject of the third, which manifests itself in the practice of Censorship — perhaps the best study in the book — and in lack of respect for the freedom of the individual, which is studied in the fifth chapter.

The sixth chapter opens fresh ground in an attack on Scholasticism, especially the system of St. Thomas Aquinas, who holds a position as the criterion of Orthodoxy in the Catholic Church, akin to that of Sankara in Vedanta. This is rather a weak and unbalanced attack, but it is significant as showing the freedom of criticism which is now tolerated and also as showing some of the real weaknesses in the Scholastic system. Finally, Archbishop Roberts — the only non-layman in the group, of whom it should be noticed two are women — writes on Contraception and War, two subjects on which Catholic thought is seriously engaged in re-thinking its attitude at present.

This book is not only of interest to Roman Catholics; it marks rather the opening of the Catholic Church on the world, its honest attempt to re-assess its faith and practice in the face of the modern world. This is something which all religions have to face to-day. Baron von Hugel once said that in every religion there are four elements, a sacramental, a social, an intellectual and a mystical. Basically all religion is mystical; it is man's endeavour to relate himself to that ultimate reality, which alone gives meaning to life. But because we are not pure spirits, but embodied souls, this aspiration normally finds expression in bodily acts and gestures, and so gives rise to rites and sacraments. Again because we are not isolated individuals but 'members of one another', sharing a common destiny, religion normally takes a social form, involving some kind of organization. Finally because we are rational beings, our religious faith demands some kind of rational formulation and so finds expression in creeds and systems. These elements are present not only in Christianity but in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, and in each religion there

is the same tendency to corruption. An over-emphasis on sacramentalism gives rise to superstition, on religious organization to casteism and communalism, on theology to a barren dogmatism. It is the mystical life which is the core of religion and the inspiration of all these external forms. What we need to-day, and what to a large extent we are witnessing, is a renewal of this inner life of religion. This alone can recover the purity of true religion and at the same time bring the different religious traditions closer to one another. This is what may be ultimately hoped from the present reform in the Roman Church.

DON BEDE GRIFFITHS.

SUFISM

THE SUFIS: By Idries Shah. With an Introduction by Robert Graves. (W. H. Allen, Pp. XXVI and 404, Price 45s.)

DIVINE DWELLERS IN THE DESERT: By Gurdial Mallik. (Grambhawana Prakashan, Karnal, Pp. 113, Price Rs. 1.25.)

An authoritative account of the Sufis and their teachings is long overdue. Obviously writing from the inside, Syed Idries Shah is most informative about the tradition, even expounding Sufi methods of training so far as is possible in a book intended for the general public. He also has chapters on a number of the most famous Sufi poets, saints and philosophers, such as Al Ghazali, Jalaluddin Rumi and Ibn Arabi. Not the least interesting of these is that on the traditional Sufi humorist Mulla Nasruddin. It makes delightful reading because he really is very funny and, what is more important, it illustrates the use of humour, shock and surprise in Sufi training.

If the author had only stuck to his subject this would have been an altogether excellent book. Unfortunately, however, he is forever trying to prove the ascendancy of Sufism over other traditions and their dependence on it. While it is impossible to deny the great influence which Sufism has had on the theory, practice and literary expression of esoterism in the West, the author spoils his case by over-stating it and completely ignoring the very real indigenous spiritual heritage of Judaism and Christianity. Turning to the East, he is even more crude, and in fact downright absurd, in trying to assign an Islamic origin to Hindu and Buddhist spirituality. Rival claims for pre-eminence are to be expected from the exoteric exponents of the various religions, but one has a right to expect greater

understanding from an author who has penetrated to the spiritual essence of any one of them.

The introduction, echoed in the blurb, further increases the crudity, referring to the author as the Grand Sheikh of the Sufis and as being in the senior male line of descent from the Prophet Mohammed. Actually there is no Grand Sheikh of the Sufis, each order having its own sheikh or head, and there is no male line of descent from Mohammed, his only descendents being through his daughter Fatima.

Despite the narrow and quarrelsome tone in which this book is written, it remains a valuable and informative work on a subject about which few have written with comparable authority. However regrettable its approach, there is at present no replacement for it.

Gurdial Mallik's little book on the Sufis of Sindh also speaks of the universality of Sufism but in a gracious and tolerant manner, unlike the other. It is verbose rather than informative but makes pleasant reading. It is depressing, how-

ever, to read the author's conclusion that little if anything of this glorious heritage remains in Sindh to-day.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

GOD: By Mrs. Dinshaw S. Paowalla. (Published by Framroj Dhanbhooa, Bulsar, pp. 13, Price not stated.)

Mrs. Paowalla has sent us from Hong Kong a little booklet recommending love and service as a discipline for people in general and self-enquiry for those who seek spiritual life culminating in Divine Union.

GLIMPSES OF GOD: By M. D. Japheth. (The author, 24-B, Hamam St., Bombay-1, Pp. 72, Price Rs. 3.75, 6s., \$1.00.)

Fifteen selected sermons delivered by the author in a Bombay synagogue touch on various religious and sociological problems. They are idealistic and high-minded but completely exoteric, with no glimpse of the Knowledge that is Being.

Sri Ramanasramam

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(Continued from the previous issue)

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The Mountain Path

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Ashram Bulletin

JAYANTI

The 85th birth anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated at his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai according to the Tamil calendar on Monday, December 21st., 1964. The celebration opened in the early morning with hymns to Sri Maharshi and to Arunachala. The elaborate morning pujas included *Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa Abhishekam*, chanting of the Taittiriya and Mahanarayana Upanishads and *Laksharchana* of Ramana Sahasranamam, the thousand names of Ramana. Then followed the arthi to Sri Bhagavan and to Sri Matrubuteswarar. The Presence of Sri Maharshi was powerfully felt. A large number of guests were invited to stay to lunch and thousands of the poor were fed.

The Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri Sayaji Lakshman Silam, came here specially to attend the celebration and was received by the President of the Ashram, Sri Venkataraman. He was



introduced to members of the Board of Trustees and to distinguished members of the Ashram. He took part in the entire celebration and only left for Pondicherry in the evening.

In the afternoon there was singing of Sri Ramana Gitam by Sri Om Sadhu and his party.

The celebrations concluded with the singing of Tamil hymns to Sri Maharshi and Sri Arunachaleswarar.

Good wishes for the occasion were received from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India; Sri Karan Singh, Governor of Kashmir; Sri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, Governor of Madras; Sri K. Kamaraj, President of the All-India Congress Committee; Sri T. T. Krishnamachari, Finance Minister of India; Sri N. Sanjiva Reddy, Minister for Steel and Mines, and others.

Among the distinguished visitors were Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, head of the philosophy department of Madras University; Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, A. R. Narayana Rao, Sri Framji Dorabji, Sri Umesh Dutt, N. R. Viswanathan, Professor of Physics at Annamalai University, Mr. and Mrs. Martin, both internationally known artists, Dr. V. N. Sharma and the Swiss lady psychologist Dr. Kockel.



The Trustees of Sri Ramanasramam: (L to R) Sri S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy, Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri Sailam (Chief Guest), Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, and Sri K. Srinivasachariar.



85th Sri Ramana Jayanthi Feast: The President personally attends on the Ramana Bhaktas: Mr. & Mrs. Osborne, Miss Merston and Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy are seen among the hundreds of devotees who were fed on that day.

BOMBAY

On the 23rd February, the 85th Jayanthi of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated in Bombay at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan by the Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee.

The Governor of Maharashtra, Dr. P. V. Cherian, presided over the function. Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, who was the chief speaker, could not be present on the occasion since he had to leave for Delhi on urgent matter; however, his written speech was read by the Committee's Vice Chairman, Sri P. V. Puranik. Dr. K. M. Munshi's presence and participation in the function added grace to its glory. There was a good number of Ramana Bhaktas and the function was a great success.



Ramana Jayanthi: Celebrated in Bombay on February 23rd by Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee: Governor of Maharashtra, Dr. P. V. Cherian, speaking; by his side are, Dr. K. M. Munshi, Sri P. B. Kotak, Sri G. V. Puranik and Mrs. Mani Sahukar.

A Sri Ramana Festival was celebrated for nine days in Bombay, from December 16th to 24th inclusive, at the Gita Govind Hall in Sion East. On the 16th evening it was inaugurated by the Hon. C. R. Pattabhiraman, Union Deputy Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

MADRAS

Sri Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Alwarpet, Madras, celebrated the Jayanti on December 27th. After Veda parayana Mr. Justice K. S. Venkataraman spoke, explaining the trials and triumphs of sadhana, whether one pursued the traditional Hindu or Buddhist methods or the less formal technique of Sri Ramana.

DELHI

Devotees in Delhi celebrated the Jayanti on December 25th at a public meeting organized by the Ramana Kendra at the Satsang Hall of the Vinayaka Temple, Sarojini Nagar. After Veda



Ramana Jayanthi at Sri Ramana Kendra in New Delhi.

parayana, Sri Tandaveswara of Sankara Vidya Kendra and Prof. K. Swaminathan spoke of the profound impact of Bhagavan's presence and the universal appeal of his teachings. Sri K. Ramakrishna Bhat recited his Sanskrit slokas on Bhagavan. Verses from Bhagavan's hymns to Arunachala and Muruganar's Tamil poems to Bhagavan were sung.

PALGHAT

The Vijnana Ramaneeya Mandiram, Palghat, Kerala, celebrated the Jayanti both on the 20th and 21st. This is quite legitimate, since Sri Ramana was born about midnight between the two dates. On both days there were pujas, archanas and nama-japas in the morning. Soon after the morning puja on the 20th the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita were recited by Sri Mani Iyer and his children and in the evening there was a discourse on Sri Ramana Darsana by Sri G. Balakrishnan Nair, lecturer at Victoria College. On the 21st evening Sri P. V. Rajagopal, Divisional Superintendent of the Southern Railway, gave a discourse on 'The Path of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi'.

RAJAHMUNDY

A Ramana Jayanti meeting was held at the Hindu Samaj Buildings. There was chanting of passages from the Upanishads and a number of eminent persons spoke on the importance of Bhagavan's teaching.

CALICUT

There is no Sri Ramana organization at Calicut, but the Jayanti was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Sri Sai Baba Mission Bhajan Mandir. There was bhajan and recitation of Bhagavan's Upadesa Saram and of Sanskrit slokas composed in praise of Bhagavan by Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni. After this several devotees who had had the inestimable privilege of sitting at the feet of Sri Bhagavan told personal reminiscences of him as well as speaking about his teaching. Dr. M. Anandan, Secretary of the Shri Sai Baba Mission, who is also an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan, spoke briefly but clearly on the central theme of Self-enquiry in Bhagavan's teaching.

A MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

On New Year's Day Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, leading vocal musician of Carnatic music in South India, whose voice and depth of devotion



Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi's concert: She thrilled the audience with her devotional songs.

were praised by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi, gave a concert at the Ashram in willing response to our request. She was accompanied on the violin by Sri Subramaniam and on the mridangam by Sri Tanjavur Murthy. The concert consisted of devotional songs in Tamil, Sanskrit and Hindi chosen by the singer herself and lasted for three and a half hours. The large audience, consisting of both Hindus and foreigners, were held spell-bound and some of them moved to tears by her vibrant, melodious voice and the devotion and feeling in her singing.

Smt. Subbulakshmi's husband, Sri T. Sadasivan, editor and owner of the popular Tamil weekly 'Kalki', also honoured us with his presence on the occasion. They were presented with Ashram publications as well as a large portrait of Sri Bhagavan. Both of them seemed very pleased with their visit here, and after their return to Madras Sri Sadasivan wrote: "It would not be entirely correct to say that we enjoyed our short stay at the Ashram; it would be more correct to say that we felt blessed."

Devotees are the more grateful to them since this is the first of a series of benefit performances which this great musician has graciously consented to give in aid of the building fund needed to erect the large meditation hall that is planned in front of Sri Bhagavan's samadhi.

MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

The July issue of *The Mountain Path* will be largely on the theme of Realization and Guidance and the October issue largely on the theme of Orthodoxy.

Donations of books to The Mountain Path library will be gratefully received.

IN MEMORIAM

CHINNASWAMI'S ARADHANA

The 12th aradhana or death anniversary of 'Chinnaswami' or 'The Lesser Swami', that is Sri Niranjanananda Swami, who was the Ashram Sarvadhikari (as described in our issue of Jan. 1964) was celebrated in the Ashram where his samadhi or shrine is located, on 17th Jan. The devotees assembled for the occasion and paid due homage to one whose life-long guidance of the Ashram in a spirit of service and devotion to Bhagavan led to the construction of the fine Ashram premises we now enjoy.



Chinnaswami

VISITORS

As usual at this time of year, there was a constant flow of visitors. Outstanding among them was, perhaps, Anthony Brooke of Sarawak who spent several weeks here. He was much drawn to Arunachala and often spent the whole day alone there, setting forth in the morning with a bunch of bananas for sustenance. He also circumambulated the holy hill almost every day.



Anthony Brooke

We were also interested to have a visit from the Italian novelist Piero Scanziani. He presented us with a signed copy of his novel 'I Cinque Continenti' ('The Five Continents') in which there is mention of Bhagavan and his teaching. Unfortunately there is no English translation of it.

Fast on the heels of Olga Mago, mentioned in our last News Bulletin, comes another lady from Venezuela, this time Irma Potess de Valera, an artist of international repute who is going on from here to Beyruth, where she is holding an exhibition. She was already a firm devotee of Bhagavan before leaving home and came to India only for the sake of visiting his Ashram.

Many readers were impressed by the articles we published in our issues of April and July 1964 on the Secrets and Symbolism of Arunachala. Now we have regretfully to announce the demise of their author, Sri T. K. Sundaresa Iyer, whose last article, entitled 'Siva Lingam', appears in this issue. After being a close devotee of Sri Bhagavan for some fifty years he passed away in Sri Ramana Nagar at 6-10 a.m. on Friday Feb. 5th at the age of 68. Although not of a great age, he had become very frail. For quite a while he remained permanently on the Ashram precincts, not even visiting his children. He passed away peacefully, conscious to the very end and was cremated with due rites in the presence of many Ramana bhaktas.



T. K. S.

Born into a strictly orthodox Brahmin family, he was at first put off by accounts of Sri Bhagavan's impatience with formal orthodoxy and had to be literally forced by a cousin to pay his first visit to him in 1908. Having once seen him, however, he became his ardent devotee. As he explained with profound insight to this editor: "Bhagavan was above formal orthodoxy or unorthodoxy. Whatever he did was orthodox because he did it, since he was higher than Manu and was himself the source of orthodoxy. People who failed to see that were putting the letter above the Spirit."

He was always very helpful to the Ashram authorities, gladly lending a hand with office correspondence, publication work, pujas and the Veda Patasala.

Sri Sundaresa Iyer was one of those who was captivated by the magnetic personality of Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni, about whom there is an article in this issue. He learned the Rig Veda Sutras from him and under his guidance followed for a length of time the Mantra-Homa Marga. When the Muni left for Belgaum in 1926 he remained here and practically made the Ashram his home.

May he rest in peace at the Feet of Bhagavan.

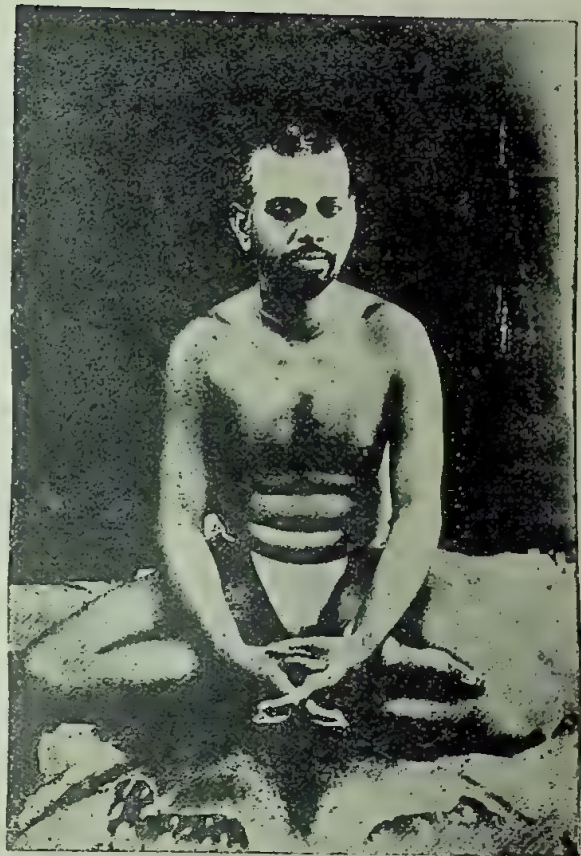
INTRODUCING

Of Bhagavan's few short books one of the most beautiful is *Spiritual Instruction*. It is little known because Bhagavan never wrote it out in a continuous form, as he did *Who am I?* and *Self-Enquiry* but left it in its original form of question and answer, and it was therefore not included in his *Collected Works*. In particular, it contains beautiful definitions of the Guru and upadesa, including the following passage which shows in what an uncompromising sense Bhagavan used the term 'Guru': "The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others and is quite free from the idea that he is the Enlightened or Liberated One, while those around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance. His self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances, and he is never perturbed."

Most of these explanations were given to an elementary school teacher, by name Natesa Mudaliar. It was as far back as 1918, before the present Ashram was built, that, fired with enthusiasm from his reading of Swami Vivekananda, he approached Bhagavan in Skandashram Cave and sought his upadesa. In those days Bhagavan spoke little and the rumour spread that he took no disciples and gave no upadesa. And indeed the first time Natesa visited him he sat silent, not vouchsafing a word, and Natesa returned home dejected.



Natanananda



However that only strengthened his resolve. A Sat-Guru must be found, and where was another? His mind always flew to the Maharshi. In 1920 he wrote a few letters to the Maharshi, but there was at that time no Ashram office and no correspondence was maintained, so no reply came. In one letter he said that if Sri Maharshi would not bless him with upadesa in this life he would have to be reborn to do so in another incarnation. A few days after this Sri Maharshi appeared to him in a dream and told him that his help would follow if he first meditated on God in the form of Maheswara. Natesa followed this instruction for some time and then to his surprise and pleasure received a reply from Sri Vasudeva Sastriar on behalf of Sri Bhagavan that his letters had been placed before Bhagavan and that he could come for darshan.

He accordingly went to Tiruvannamalai and first worshipped the Lord in the temple there. A Brahmin there to whom he told his story advised him that it would be a good sign if he could first get upadesa from the elusive Seshadri Swami who

also lived on the Hill.¹ The two of them accordingly went in search of Seshadri Swami. After a good deal of search they contacted him and he said: "When the mind rejects objects one after another what survives this elimination is Jnana and That is God. All is That and That alone. It is madness to run to hills and caves in quest of it. Go without fear."

Full of joy, Natesa went up the hill to Skandashram and sat before the Maharshi for some hours. The Maharshi still did not speak to him but before rising to go for food twice looked intently at him. Henceforth Natesa visited the Ashram every month but a year went by before he presumed to open his mouth and ask Bhagavan for his *anugraha* or Grace. Bhagavan said: "I am always giving it. If you can't apprehend it what can I do?" Still the silent Grace was not apprehended.

Some days later Sri Maharshi appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to unify the vision of his two eyes, withdrawing it from objects, external and internal, and to make this his form of practice. In the dream he disputed the utility of this form of practice but Sri Maharshi told him to try it and see.

¹ For whom see 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge', Ch. VI, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

After following this dream upadesa for some time Natesa had another dream in which he affirmed to Sri Maharshi that he was not the body, whereupon Sri Maharshi placed his hand on his head and then on the right side of his chest, pressing hard. This caused some pain but he considered it a gift of Grace. On waking he felt that the Maharshi had given him *Hasta Diksha* and opened his 'heart'.

On his next visit to Skandashram the Maharshi told him that the Atman was already present so that there was no such thing as obtaining it. It is already obtained. On this he experienced peace.

About 1926 Natesa asked Bhagavan for permission to renounce the world and become a hermit. Bhagavan dissuaded him, but in spite of this he could not give up the idea and finally donned the ochre robe unauthorised. He did not find that it brought him the peace he had anticipated and after a few years he was persuaded to resume his normal mode of life. He wrote in Tamil 'Ramana Darsanam' in which there is a happy blending of Gurujnana and Gurubhakti. He is still in Tiruvannamalai, under the name of Natanananda,* but living in retirement and known to few.

* We are glad to inform our friends that he has since purchased a house in Ramana Nagar and has settled down very near the Ashram, thus enabling his fellow-devotees to contact him whenever they wish to.

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are glad to inform our readers that the response to the journal from readers in India and abroad has been far in excess of our most sanguine expectations. We will be glad to receive offers for the representation of the journal in all countries outside India for the purpose both of enrolling subscribers and of distributing copies to them in their own country. For terms and conditions please apply to:

The Managing Editor,
'THE MOUNTAIN PATH',
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai, S. India.



Letters TO THE EDITOR

Like an expert cook who knows the tastes of his customers, to use a mundane example, your *Mountain Path* caters excellently to the tastes of your vast audience. I have over the years perused many journals dealing with spiritual matters but none has brought such a fresh breath as yours on these difficult topics. As Lord Macaulay humorously remarked that the best part of an uncle's letter was in the seal, so the best part of *The Mountain Path* is in the last item, that is in its letters from readers and the editor's replies.

S. ANANTHALWAR.

* * *

I must write and say "Bless you and thank you for the spreading of Bhagavan's teachings." They are a wonderful inspiration. May the Blessing of God fall on all who read *The Mountain Path*.

I was very thrilled to read in your January issue that a person from my home town of Sale, Cheshire, had written in to you, and even more so to read the inspiring article by Joel Goldsmith, whom I have heard speaking in England and to see in an earlier issue the letter from our good friend Clare Cameron of Chichester. I never expected to see their names in *The Mountain Path*. Isn't it surprising how spiritual seekers are somehow drawn together! I will certainly be with your Sale correspondent and others everywhere in meditation at 10 p.m. not only on Thursdays but every evening.

MRS. E. PRESTNER,
Sale, Cheshire.

* * *

I am so much impressed by the contents of *The Mountain Path* that I can hardly refrain from helping to spread it to all my Brazilian brothers by translating some of your articles and publishing them in Portuguese in our papers and maga-

zines with a universalist mentality. I would very much appreciate your approval and authorisation for this.

MARIO ALLGAYER COSTA,
Brazil.

By all means. We are glad to have our articles translated and republished—with acknowledgement, of course.

Editor.

* * *

The spiritual *Mountain Path* is steep and a hard climb, as we all know, but you are making the path smooth through your *Mountain Path*.

I consider it my rarest privilege to have fallen at the feet of Sri Ramana in 1939.

M. P. SELLASAMY,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

* * *

Without a question of a doubt this is the finest journal I have ever had the privilege to read. You can quote me as saying that the universal Truth, Faith and Hope expressed in the various articles, especially in the works of Sri Ramana, is the real hope for the future of mankind in these troubled days. I want to thank you personally for giving such a work to us. Sri Ramana dwells on each page and in each breath.

DAVID TEPLITZ,
San Rafael, California.

* * *

I have received the January 1965 issue with your exquisite poem in it—"Be still . . ." Oh how hard it is to be so in this modern age but how absolutely essential it is. That poem is a gem. Have you written any others like it?

Needless to say I sent my subscription for another year. It's a fine paper—I think unique in its scope by its embrace of all facets of religion with no bias on any one.

NELL SHARP, Surrey.

The beauty of truth shines over the poem, 'The Two Paths' in the October editorial.

HANS DE REEDE, Elba.

I have just read every sentence of the editor's book reviews in the back numbers. What clarity, what ripeness of mind! And I have just read the answers he gives to readers' letters. I feel that he just says what Bhagavan would have said himself. The way he legitimately condemns certain books in his reviews will do a lot of good to readers. I feel it will be difficult to maintain this standard of excellence. I shall be happy to be wrong in this.

BABCHI, New Delhi.

The *Mountain Path* is improving from issue to issue and I must congratulate you on this. Your editorial on 'Karma Marga' is superb in form and expression.

D. S. SASTRI, Madras.

I have to compliment you on your magazine. It is so far the only magazine which I really read from the first to the last page and to which I refer back when reading other publications.

K. PRACHT, Bombay.

I would like to request you to include photographs of Sri Ramana in different positions. This will be of much help to those like me who had not the good fortune of seeing Bhagavan in human form.

DR. M. D. NAYAK,
Kumta, North Kanara

From time to time as occasion offers.

Editor.

The *Mountain Path* is indeed a joy and a blessing. Being a devotee of only recent standing, I can nevertheless marvel at the way Sri Bhagavan's influence has been shaping all my life. His kindness and help in various recent trials have been tremendous.

JAMES WARNER,
Ramataim, Israel.

Thanks for the 'super' October issue. To Mr. Devaraja Mudaliar who wrote 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' I can only give grateful thanks. The problem for me is this: I have been conditioned since childhood to do everything I can first and then surrender. Somewhere I am confused. We seem to be able to do something about our problems, Krishnamurti notwithstanding, but then he perplexes me. He is opposed to meditation and at the same time friends who have known him over the years say he is the product of meditation. All very confusing.

JUNE L. HEATH,
Menlo Park, California.

To do what you can first and then leave it to God when you can do no more means that you are using God as a last instrument for furthering your interests; but how do you know that they ought to be furthered? In the editorial of the Jan. 1965 issue of *THE MOUNTAIN PATH* you will have seen the quotation from the Bhagavad Gita: "Do not be motivated by the fruit of action, but also do not cling to inaction." That answers your problem. You should act in the way that seems to you right, simply because it is right, and leave the outcome to God.

Editor.

There is always great joy for me in receiving *The Mountain Path*, not only because of the splendid articles but also for the news of so many people I met at Sri Ramanasramam who are now dear to me. The pictures of Bhagavan and Muruganar in the October issue made me extremely happy.

DOROTHEA GRAEFIN VON MATUSCHKA,
Berlin.

It is with pleasure and anticipation that I send you the enclosed Postal Order for next year's *Mountain Path*.

I am a teacher of English in the BBC's world-wide service of 'English by radio' and it was in our library here in Bush House that I first came across Mr. Osborne's book of the Maharshi's Collected Works. I was transfixed. Here was a hundred percent corroboration of the teaching I was beginning to learn from the lectures and books of Joel Goldsmith.

Now I have found the same teaching hidden in Buddhism and Islam. Really *The Mountain Path* is an inspired publication.

NORMAN FRASER,
London.

I have just bought your quarterly, *The Mountain Path*, and I feel that I must write to you to congratulate you on such an enterprise, and so well produced too.

I have been interested in the published accounts of Sri Ramana Maharshi's sayings and answers for

over ten years now. Soon after reading the first volume of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi' I had a dream in which he sat quite unperturbed while outside the room in which he sat and just behind his back there occurred the most violent earthquake and storm. He seemed not to know fear at all, and I then realised that this is what realisation is, a rebirth into a new life where there is fear no longer but only serenity.

Perhaps one day I may be able to visit you in the Ashram. Whether a visit would help me to follow the so hard yet so simple precepts of the Maharshi I do not know. I rather think that we stay with the same thoughts wherever we are and it is these thoughts, the mind, that are the impediment, is it not?

Will you write an article giving us who never met the Maharshi some idea of the silences and the sort of length of time they lasted. For instance, I often wonder whether the Maharshi always answered immediately the questions put to him in the Talks? Was there a pause? How long did it last? Did any questioner ever leave without an answer? Or was it more conversational in style and for the most part rapid?

Thank you again for including all religions and faiths in your net — a truly wonderful attitude — and most refreshingly new — the spirit of the age to come.

MARK WILDING,
Bournemouth.

It is, of course, one's own mind that is the impediment. Nevertheless, the pervading Presence of Bhagavan at Tiruvannamalai can be a great help in mastering it. It varies from case to case whether and for how long such help is needed.

The Maharshi's replies to questions also varied from case to case. Usually they were quick and conversational, but when the motive behind them was not right or when silence was called for he might delay or withhold a verbal reply. Typical illustrations of this are given in the 'Letters' of Nagamma in our first three issues.

Editor.

Permit me to congratulate Prof. K. Subrahmanyam on his brilliant article 'Transcendence of Karma'. In particular I liked:

1. His saying that sadhana "in earnestness and humility renders us less and less ineligible to receive the highest gift." But adding that finally it is always an act of Grace.

2. "Attention is alertness, it is sraddha." "Inattention is death itself." The more one becomes attentive to one's vasanas and watches them, the

more they loosen their hold, thus lightening pure awareness.

3. His exposition of yajna.

It is a profound article and should be read and re-read.

U. D.,
Sri Ramanasramam,

I appreciate the spiritual tone of your journal and note that your appeal is a universal one. Any other approach is immature and the Christian Church itself will have to re-think its attitude to other religions.

ERNEST SWIFT,
Wiltshire.

The fortieth verse of Bhagavan's 'Forty Verses on Reality' on page 205 of the October 1964 *Mountain Path* reads: "If it is said that Liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of the three forms of Liberation is the only true Liberation."

It is my humble opinion that this does not convey the exact meaning so I request you to correct that verse. The real meaning is that the extinction of the ego which enquires which form of Liberation is true is the true Liberation.

This is an important difference and, as the Maharshi's words are eternal, they should be translated true to the spirit.

Also at the beginning when I saw in the first issue of *The Mountain Path* the words "after the death of the Maharshi" it pained me and I wished to write to you about it. I take the opportunity to do so now.

M. S. NAGARAJAN,
Tiruchirappalli.

Thank you. Your correction of the translation is justified and important.

As to the expression "the death of the Maharshi", it is more usual to say "the Mahasamadhi" or "Mahanirvana" and to say that a saint "attained Mahasamadhi" rather than that he died; but in the case of the Maharshi this is not strictly correct, since he was already in a state of Mahanirvana in his lifetime and attained nothing on death. As he himself said: "There is no difference between Jivanmukti and Videhamukti. There is nothing more to attain." On the other hand, he spoke frequently of the 'death' of a Jnani, explaining that it made no difference to him. Therefore it was considered better to use this expression, as he did, to denote a simple physical event.

Editor.

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Statement about ownership and other particulars about *The Mountain Path* (according to Form IV, Rule 8, circulated by the Registrar of Newspapers for India):

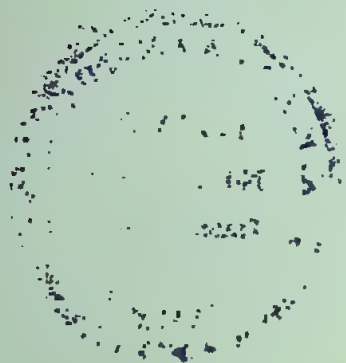
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Place of Publication | .. | Madras-18. |
| 2. Periodicity of its Publication | .. | Quarterly. |
| 3. Printer's Name | .. | T. K. Venkatesan. |
| Nationality | .. | Indian. |
| Address | .. | The Jupiter Press Private Ltd.,
109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18. |
| 4. Publisher's Name | .. | T. N. Venkataraman. |
| Nationality | .. | Indian. |
| Address | .. | 109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18. |
| 5. Editor's Name | .. | Arthur Osborne. |
| Nationality | .. | British. |
| Address | .. | Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. |
| 6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than 1% of the total capital. | .. | Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai. |

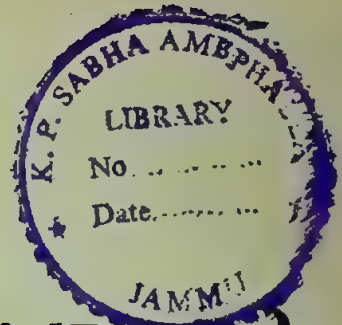
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL II

JULY, 1965

No. 3

REALIZATION AND GUIDANCE

[EDITORIAL]

Once it is perceived that effort and a guide are needed in the quest of life's Goal, the question arises, whichever path one may follow, whether the guide need be a realized man or not.

Strange as it may sound, there is no necessary connection between a man's state of inner illumination and the grace that flows through him to strengthen and inspire others. It is possible for such grace not to flow through a realized man, in which case his high state will not be recognized. It is simply not his function—nature—destiny—whichever term one may use—to guide others. Indeed, Bhagavan would sometimes say of wandering beggars or sadhus: "How do we know who comes to us in their form?" This implies that it is not a man's inner state that is recognizable but the dynamic effect of his state. The state remains the same whether a dynamic effect flows from it or not.

Naturally it is not easy to give examples of this, for the simple reason that such a person would remain unknown; but there are two that come to mind. One is Christ before he set forth on his mission. Accord-

ing to Christian doctrine, he was born without original sin, that is to say Self-realized from birth. And yet no one in his home town felt that he was a holy man, no crowds flocked to him, no disciples sought him out, no power flowed through him to effect cures. In fact, when he went back there later his fellow-townsmen were incredulous that the local carpenter's boy should have turned out a prophet (which confirms, incidentally, that he had spent his youth there and that they did know him as the local carpenter's boy). The other is the Maharshi. Realization descended on him spontaneously when he was still a schoolboy, but his changed state was perceived by nobody, either at home or at school.¹ It was only later when power flowed through him and disciples began to gather round that he was recognized for what he was.

It is also possible for grace and power to flow through one who is not realized. On the exoteric plane it is well known how many powerful religious leaders—the Wes-

¹ Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge, Chs. 2 and 3, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

leys and Luthers of history—have inspired others and led great movements without any claim to higher understanding or inner development. It is impossible to doubt that in many such cases the Grace of God has worked through them. But spiritual guidance of the aspirant is in a different category, requiring esoteric knowledge and insight. Is it possible here too for the unrealized man to act aright through Grace? To some extent it is. It is difficult to find examples here too, this time for the reason that followers of such a one are likely to claim that he is realized. I shall take as an example the controversial figure of Swami Vivekananda. On the one hand, his followers claim realization for him, while on the other hand some foreign critics are so derogatory as to deny that he was even rightly guided. In fact one of them takes it on himself to declare that Ramakrishna was deluded by his infatuation for Vivekananda.² Let us examine the case.

Sri Ramakrishna was enthusiastic about Narendra Dutt, the future Vivekananda, and spoke of him as the person destined to carry on his work of restoring vigour to a languishing, almost decadent Hinduism. By the laying on of hands he induced in Naren a pre-vision of Realization. When this experience ended he said: "Now I am going to lock it up in a box and you will have to go out and do your work without it. But when your work is finished the Mother will give it back to you." Records of Vivekananda's last days, when he had withdrawn from all active work, show that Realization did indeed come to him and he saw aloofly and objectively the imperfections in his life-work.

Here we have a picture equally far from a Self-realized Vivekananda and a deluded and infatuated Ramakrishna. What this picture implies is that Ramakrishna's work was to be carried on by one from whom Realization was to be withheld until the work was accomplished, very much like the Mahayana ideal of the Bhodisattva.

There is no doubt about the grace that flowed through Vivekananda. After his death, the Mother, Sarada Devi, said of him: "What powers did Naren Swami have by himself? It was because God acted through him that he achieved what he did."³ At the famous Chicago Parliament of Religions—famous now only because he took part in it—it was his presence not his arguments that impressed people. He had got no farther than "Sisters and brothers of America!" when a torrent of applause swept the hall. From that point on, in speech after speech, contact after contact, people felt the power and grace in him. A recently published book of tributes, by thirty odd of his admirers, Hindu and Western⁴ shows the overpowering impression he made on people, the support they derived from him, and the simplicity and humour that he maintained despite their adulation.

Nevertheless, to say in general that the guru need not be realized would be to simplify the question far too much. In the first place, it is usually harmful for a man to set up as a guru before he has attained Realization himself. It impedes his further progress on the path by turning his energy outwards to the guidance of others when it should still be turned inwards to his own sadhana. If not impossible for such a person to make further progress, it is at least much more difficult. Not only that, but there is danger of his latent egoism being revived, bringing him to a worse state than he was in before. If the ego still exists it may lie low for a while, facilitating the flow of Grace, and then rise up and turn this to its own service, poisoning it in the process. Moreover there is the danger of hypocrisy and arrogance. So sweet is adulation to the ego that he is likely to allow his disciples to treat him as a realized man when he is not, which is hypocrisy. Or he will become arrogant and overbearing, craving flattery, refusing to listen to criticism, shouting down arguments. It is foolish to invite such dangers, which

² See *Language of the Self*, Ch. 2, by F. Schuon, Ganesh & Co., Madras.

³ At *Holy Mother's Feet*, p. 69, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta.

⁴ *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta.

few can withstand. In parenthesis, it should be added that Vivekananda does seem to have withstood them, perhaps because he passed on all the homage he received to his Master, perhaps also through that Master's invisible protection. If he had not withstood the dangers he could not have attained the ultimate Realization which is recorded.

And what about the disciples of an unrealized guru? In former times it was quite normal in India, both among Hindus and Muslims, to receive initiation from a sort of family guru, and something of this still remains. However, that is something of a low order of potency, whether for good or evil—perhaps not much more than confirmation in a Christian church. The disciple does not seek realization nor the guru claim it.

However, one who seeks a guru in his quest for Realization must understand that no one can guide others farther than he has gone himself; therefore an unrealized guru would not be of much use at the best. But there is danger of the worst—that the guru's faults of character may be transmitted to his disciples. In general, any sickness of character is as infectious as a physical disease. That is why the Masters lay such emphasis on the people a disciple associates with, urging him to seek the company of the wise and pure and shun the evil-minded. Moreover, a disciple lays himself open to the influence of his guru as to no one else. To submit to a guru who has developed the vices of hypocrisy or arrogance or any other manifestations of a resurgent ego is as foolhardy as for a woman to take a husband who has T.B. There is little likelihood of escaping infection.

Guénon likened the influence flowing through a spiritual functionary of any sort to the electric current flowing through a wire, unaffected by the cleanliness or otherwise of the wire; it would be more apt to compare it to water flowing through a pipe to a thirsty man. If the pipe is filthy inside the water will quench his thirst just the same, but it will probably give him typhoid or cholera in the process. It is advisable to

weigh the dangers against the advantages very carefully before accepting a guru.

The matter is further complicated by the question what is meant by 'realization'. Bhagavan was quite categorical that there are no stages of Self-realization. Either you have realized the Self or you have not. By Self-realization he meant the dissolution of the illusory ego-sense and its replacement by constant, conscious Identity with the universal Self or pure Being. That is the state in which he was. That is the ultimate. There is nothing beyond. For such a one there is no going into samadhi, for he is always in samadhi, whether with outer awareness or not; no prayer, for who is to pray to whom? No revelation, for who is to reveal to whom?

But this is a very rare state. There are two kinds of approximation to it. One is that of the man who has a theoretical understanding of Identity fortified by a more or less constant inner, non-theoretical remembrance and by occasional glimpses of realized Identity. It is clear from their writings that even such great mystic philosophers as Plotinus and Eckhart come in this category. This is the path of approach of Bhagavan's disciples. Such a state cannot be called realization.

Some of Bhagavan's disciples did act as gurus, even in his lifetime. He did not forbid it. If asked whether a man could act as a guru before attaining realization he would be more likely to reply non-committally: "If it is a man's destiny to be a guru he will." But he did at times warn against it. On the whole he made it clear that it is better and safer to concentrate on one's own sadhana than to try to guide that of others.

Nor is there anything egoistic about doing so. (How can there be anything egoistic about trying to uproot the ego?) In the first place, silent, invisible influences are far more potent than the materialist imagines: whether the spiritual wayfarer gives formal guidance to others or not, the influence that radiates from him will affect them, and the

greater his purity, the more free he is from the ambition to lead others, the more beneficent will the influence be. In the second place, the Maharshi is himself the Guru of all who turn to him in their heart, now as in his body's lifetime, and no intermediate guru is needed.

The other type of approximation is through the actualisation of latent powers and realization of higher states of being. Various less direct spiritual paths lead to this—yogic and Tantric paths in Hinduism, Hermetic in Mediaeval Christianity and Islam, among others. This is far more complicated. Such a path may lead through successive stages, each one approached through a new initiation and leading to a new 'realization'—not Self-realization but the realization of some higher state. This type of path also may or may not be illuminated by pre-glimpses of its goal, it may or may not involve states of ecstasy. The materialist simplifies things far too much in conceiving only of a physical world and a spiritual worldlessness; there is a vast luxuriance of intermediary states just as there is physically of forms of life between man and stone. The Advaitin also simplifies things, but deliberately, in closing his eyes to all intermediate states with their powers and experiences in order to avoid the danger of being distracted from his goal by them. But there are paths and teachings which lead stage by stage through the complexity. The hermetists had their graded heavens; the Sufis have a series of *maqamat* or stages of realization. Buddhist writers also speak of stages. It is quite evident that many of the Christian saints had neither actual realization nor even theoretical understanding of the ultimate truth of Identity, and yet they were saints and had powers, among them that of guiding aspirants.

Similarly there is no reason for presuming that prophets in the Semitic tradition must have been in a permanent state of realized Identity. Rather the Hebrew and Islamic scriptures suggest that they were not, that it was not necessary for the work they had to do in the tradition in which they had to do it. For instance, the so-called 'chariot mysticism' of the Old Testament Prophets is obviously in the realm of duality, of seeing, not being. The Qur'an in particular insists that prophets are just men who have been called to a particularly responsible but onerous undertaking. Mohammed himself is said to have declared that he had a time with God in which no angel or inspired prophet was equal to him. It seems to be straining language unjustifiably to suggest that this implies realized identity, but in any case he hastened to add that this was not his normal state but only occasional.

Returning then to a consideration of these two approaches to Self-Realization in the sense of constant, conscious abidance in a state of Identity: one who has attained stabilisation at some station on the Mountain Path, even though the summit remains obscured from his sight, even though he may not know that there is one, has thereby acquired certain powers which he is competent to use; and it may well be that the power to act as a guru is among them. He will lead others by the path he has trodden as far as he has gone. That may be less far than wayfarers of the former type mentioned, but on the other hand his stabilisation is an achievement lacking to them. It is unlikely that they will be qualified gurus, whereas he, in the organization to which he belongs, through the technique which he has mastered, will be able to guide others to the station in which he abides.

Noumenon is ubiquitous, all pervading; there cannot be anywhere in which it is not, nor any moment at which it is not present.
But itself also is not.

MODES OF SAMADHI

By NAGAMMA

3rd Dec., 1947

This morning a devotee approached Bhagavan and said: "It is said that some devotees remain in thought-free awareness (nirvikalpa samadhi) for quite a long time. Do they eat or drink at that time?"

"How can they?" Bhagavan replied. "Do you eat when you are asleep?"

"No, but what I want to know is whether the mind exists during nirvikalpa samadhi," the questioner continued.

"Why shouldn't it? What exists in sleep exists in that state also. From 12 noon to 2 in the afternoon the doors of the hall are shut and we sleep inside. That is an illusion."

The devotee next asked how it is with those who are in a state of complete Self-awareness during the waking state, i.e. without trance (that is in sahaja samadhi).

Bhagavan replied: "It may well be asked how such a one can speak if there is no 'I' (aham). But what actually happens is that what previously appeared as the 'I' or ego now becomes our true Nature or Self (swarupa). This is brought about by the destruction of the mind (manonasa). Thought-free awareness (nirvikalpa samadhi) and other kinds of samadhi are cases of the merging (laya) of the mind and not of its destruction (nasa)."

Another devotee here intervened, saying: "Even apart from the ultimate state of sahaja samadhi, samadhi is said to be of various kinds, such as savikalpa (absorbed in thought) and nirvikalpa (free from thought). Will Bhagavan explain them to us."

Bhagavan then gave the following explanation: "Shankara described six kinds of samadhi in his 'Vivekachudamani' and 'Drigdrisyaviveka'. They fall into the two main categories you have just mentioned, that is with thought and without thought

(savikalpa and nirvikalpa). The former is further divided into two kinds, drisyanuviddha and sabdanuviddha, and these are again subdivided, so we get the following six types.

1. Antar drisyanuviddha savikalpa samadhi: Meditating upon one's Self as the witness of desires and other activities of the mind.

2. Antar Sabdanuviddha savikalpa samadhi: Knowing the Self to be asanga (free from contacts), swaprakasa (self-luminous), sat-chit-ananda (being-consciousness-bliss) and advaita (non-dual).

3. Antar nirvikalpa samadhi: Experiencing the exalted feeling of Self derived from the ecstasy of the above two states and yet discarding them both and remaining motionless like an unflickering light in a windless place.

4. Bahya drisyanuviddha savikalpa samadhi: Discarding with indifference outer things, things which have name and form, and meditating on the underlying Reality.

5. Bahya sabdanuviddha savikalpa samadhi: Knowing and being aware at all times that That which manifests as Sat-chit-ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) is the universal Brahman.

6. Bahya nirvikalpa samadhi: With the experience of the above two, overcoming all desires and remaining calm and motionless like the waveless ocean.

By constantly practising these six kinds of samadhi at all times and without intermission one can attain the state of natural thought-free awareness (sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi). Until this state is attained the ego is not completely destroyed. Once this state is attained one may seem to others to see and hear, to eat and sleep, but it is an appearance only. Whatever one may do one really remains inactive.

REMINISCENCES OF BHAGAVAN REFERRING TO THE SELF AND THE LOKAS

By KRISHNA BIKSHU

In spite of being in the universal state of realized Identity, Bhagavan recognised the contingent reality of higher states equally with that of this mundane state. This was shown in the case of Venkata Sastri, one of the group of devotees who put the questions recorded in 'Sri Ramana Gita'. This devotee had been ill for a long time and, expecting a near demise, he took sannyas. He sat fully conscious to the last when death was approaching, repeating the pranava (OM mantra) in an audible voice and from time to time reporting to those around him the staged withdrawal of the prana till, with his last utterance, the prana finally departed. This was reported to Bhagavan who said: "Is that so? In that case he will go, according to the sastras, to Brahma Loka and abide there till the end of Brahma's cycle when he, together with Brahma, will merge in the formless infinity of Nirguna. Yes, Venkata Sastri must have gone to Brahma Loka. You can tell his people that I said so." What further proof is needed that Bhagavan did not regard the higher worlds as mere mirages?

On another occasion a visitor of the name of Amrutananda wrote on a piece of paper the first half of a verse. This ran: "Who is this Ramana, famed for his graciousness, who lives in Arunachala Cave? Is he Vararuchi or Siva or Vishnu or Dakshinamurti? I want to know the eminence of this Guru." Now the question is not about the essential nature of the guru but about a Ramana living in a cave on Arunachala. He left the paper with Bhagavan and went out and when he returned he found it completed by Bhagavan with the words: "Ramana is the Supreme Spirit (Paramatma) who, in the form of Knowledge abides in the heart-cavern of every person, from

Vishnu downwards and if you come to the heart with the mind melting in love and see with the eye of wisdom this will be plain to you." He is not speaking here of Ramana as an individual but of the essential nature of Ramana.

It was always to be observed that Bhagavan was against intellectual discussions about personalities or about his individual nature since he was setting before his devotees the highest goal of pure formless Being.

To deny the truth of the lokas and their Lords which is proclaimed with a hundred voices by the Sruti, the Upanishads and all other scriptures is to deny the obvious.

How are we to understand activity on the part of one who abides in the state of Brahman? The Sruti says: "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman." This implies that if it be the Saguna Brahman or Personal God that he knows he will merge in This, but if the Nirguna Brahman or Absolute then he will merge in That. Furthermore, Brahman is declared to be unmoving, unconditioned, inactive. How is this to be reconciled with the idea of His manifestation as an individual performing the work of such, whether in this one world or in many? The writer's brother Venkateswar, who wrote a life of Bhagavan in Hindi, once asked Bhagavan himself: "Swami, I see you doing work but I know that the scriptures say that the Jnani becomes one with Brahman and is non-dual. How are these two things to be reconciled?"

Bhagavan gave him the long, deep, concentrated look so familiar to his devotees and then said slowly and clearly: "Suppose I could explain this to you in words are you in a state to understand it?"

My brother pondered for a minute and then had to confess that he was not. The activity of one beyond the range of, words and thoughts is obviously not to be understood by a mind confined to them. This is a mystery that can only be unravelled by experience. Some say that it is all leela, others that it is maya, but both these explanations are just words; and words, having been formed after creation, can never go back to their source which is before creation and on a plane above them.

I have also heard Bhagavan say: "It is neither necessary nor possible for the body to have realization. I have at this moment twenty different bodies working in twenty different lokas, so if one of them suffers am I to grieve? I am not the body. One who considers himself the body may grieve, but how should I?"

On a different occasion we put the same question to Bhagavan, asking how he could exist in a number of lokas at the same time and he said that one could have as many bodies as he wished if he had the necessary power of yoga, adding: "Have you not read that at the time of ras leela Sri Krishna assumed 16,000 bodies at the same time?"

Such statements by Bhagavan affirm the existence of a number of lokas or planes of existence of which he was aware but we are not. They also show that he could assume individual form in them as in this world. Advaitic purists may be shocked at this,

saying that the Scriptures say: "He is One". But that refers only to the universal state. Every one is the same in essence on the plane of Paramartha, but that refers to fundamental, universal Reality. On the planes of empirical reality we have to note the existence of multiplicity. That is why Jesus could say: "I and my Father are One". They were separate on the empirical or manifested plane, since he had a body and the Father had not, but they were one in Essence.

Some theoretical Advaitins hold that after realization even the notion of multiplicity no longer exist. They say that once a rope which was mistaken for a snake is known to be a rope there can no longer be the illusion of its being a snake. But another school hold that even after realization the appearance of manifestation remains although it is known to be illusory. They cite the appearance of mother-of-pearl. There is no silver in it but even though one knows this the silvery appearance remains. I have heard Bhagavan confirm this view.

We must remember that the lokas are empirical realities no more real than this world of ours — but also no less real. Bhagavan confirmed this when a group of disciples from Tiruchirapalli asked him whether Siva and the other Gods and their heavens really exist. "Do you exist?" he retorted. They replied that they did, and he said: "Then in the same way they do too."

NO OTHERNESS

By JALLALUDDIN RUMI

People imagine that it is a presumptuous claim (to say 'Ana'l Haqq', 'I am God'), but really it is a presumptuous claim to say 'Ana'l abd', 'I am the servant of God', while 'Ana'l Haqq', 'I am God' is an expression of great humility. The man who says 'I am the servant of God' affirms two existences, his own and God's but he who says 'I am God' makes himself non-existent and gives himself up entirely, since what this comes to is: "I am nothing; He is all; there is no being other than God's." This is the extreme of humility and self-abasement.

THE SAGE AND THE SAINT

By N. R. BALAKRISHNAN

To abide in the Eternal Present, to be in a state of sahaja samadhi (natural evenness of mind) our mental apparatus should be focused to its central axis, the very fulcrum of our being. This focal point is the point of equilibrium by which both positive and negative have become possible. Men who cling to positive ideals and affirmations, thinking of themselves as the organizers or dispensers of good, miss the significance of this vital central point, which indeed they totally overlook. The Sages, having realized that ultimate Reality is neither existence nor non-existence, have termed it 'neti, neti,' 'not this, not that' or 'Sunyata', emptiness or void. But the ignorant do not realize that the so-called nothingness contains everything and the so-called void is the source of fullness.

The Sage sits at the centre of equilibrium, poised and steadfast in wisdom. He never moves, yet the whole world moves round him. His seeming inactivity is the most potent activity. It is what the Chinese have termed *Wei Wu Wei*, inactive activity. He truly knows because he has realized the Truth in himself. He is happy because he is wise. His mind is free from the pairs of opposites — light and dark, bond and free, good and evil. Though he may seem indifferent to events it is only the wisdom of the Sage, not the learning of the scholar or the plans of the reformer that can save the world from its suicidal stupidities. When the mind reacts either for or against a policy its equilibrium is upset; it is only when it remains poised without reaction that the true revolution takes place in a man. Being free from self-will and from the 'I-am-the-doer' illusion, such a man is a true benefactor of mankind. His life is a benefit to the whole world.

There is a difference between a saint and a Sage. A saint is benevolent and sympa-

thetic, but a Sage may outwardly appear aloof and unsympathetic. A saint prays constantly to God, since he has not risen above the notion of duality of subject and object of a created being praying to his Creator. But a Sage remains silent and steadfast in wisdom, having realized the Oneness of Being. Both drink of the same fountain, but the saint gets intoxicated with love; he plays the love-drama, sings and dances in ecstasy, bows down in devotion, ever seeks the Divine Lover, while the Sage, because of his ultimate Realization, remains silent, unperturbed and immovable as a rock. Should a saint see slaughter or bloodshed he may be horrified and weep for sorrow, but a Sage will maintain a divine indifference, looking with like equanimity on the play of children and the warring of nations, seeing behind appearances and knowing that in truth none are killed and none can be killed. It is thus that Sri Krishna consoles Arjuna before the Battle of Kurukshetra: "There never was a time when I did not exist, or you or these kings, nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. Just as in this body the embodied Self passes from childhood into youth and old age, so does He pass into another body. The wise man is not distressed by this."¹

The Sage has realized the everlasting nature of his life and is steeped in immortality even while living. "Know That to be Imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of That, the Inexhaustible."² The saint may or may not know for he is satisfied with his loving adoration of the Lord, but the Sage knows and is wise.

Through detached self-observation we can come to that impersonal, egoless state of poised perfection beyond pleasure and pain.

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, 11; 12-13.

² *Ibid.*, 11; 17.

birth and death. This kind of meditation, if it can be so-called, can be practised at any time, while walking or standing, sitting or lying down, talking to people or doing things. No special time or posture is needed for it. It is close to what the Maharshi called Self-enquiry. He said: "Meditation requires an object to meditate on, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject and no object."³ Such alert watchfulness enables us to see things as they are and to be as we are, free from distortion or exaggeration, from for or against. By means of it the mind becomes sensitive, bright and transparent. Indeed, the bliss of transcendental wisdom can be experienced only when we go beyond the frontiers of the mind to experience our pure being.

We can know the Self only by being the Self, and such knowledge-being should stand behind our doing. For without knowing the doer even our attempts to do good will only create new mischief. We raise a dust and then complain that we cannot see. We forget that muddy water is to be made

clean not by stirring it up but by leaving it to stand. It is the wrong use of the mind that leads to all the suffering and misery of the world. We are miserable because we act and live in ignorance, whereas Self-knowledge brings peace and perfect happiness beyond the power of events to disturb.

And this perfect happiness, this pure being-knowledge, is love. In its static state it is unruffled bliss; in its dynamic state it is all-embracing, all-penetrating love. This is the core of our being, but it is only when the ego-self is broken that it can well forth into consciousness. Unless the shell is broken how can we taste the kernel? It is only when we break free from the narrow individual self or ego which our mind has created and nourished that the essence of our being is discovered, and this is love. When we discover the love lying buried in the depth of our heart, which is our true being, then only are we able to live in purity and blessedness, and then only blessedness flows through us to others whether we consciously plan the flow or not, and with no taint of egoism to mar its effect on them.

³ *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, Ch. V. pub. by Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

COMPASSION

By SHEELAH ATKINSON

My eyes see the stars, but I see nothing,
For I am the stars.

My ears hear music, but I hear nothing,
For I am the music.

My hand touches my child, but I touch nothing,
For I am my child.

My foot kicks the stone, but I kick nothing,
For I am the stone.

My words wound my friend, but I wound nothing,
For I am my friend.

My body exudes filth, but I exude nothing,
For I am filth.

How then shall I not feel compassion for all that I am ?

THE SAT-GURU

By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI *

"From darkness lead me to light," says the Upanishad. The Guru is one who is competent to do this; and such a one was Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The Guru is the dispeller of ignorance and awakener of understanding. Throughout the ages India has produced such.

Ignorance is not merely absence of knowledge. This cannot be corrected by thought nor right knowledge awakened by an intellectual process, because it is the intellect itself which is the limiting factor. The Sat-Guru, who is Divine Consciousness in human form, is the only guide to Enlightenment, the only bridge from the mental concepts in which the disciple is enclosed to spiritual consciousness. Said Sri Shankara: "Even though you possess learning and all gifts and endowments, yet will it not avail you unless your mind is protected by the Guru and absorbed in him." And again, in 'Vivekachudamani', he says: "There are three things that are rare and due to the Grace of God: a human birth, thirst for Liberation and the protective care of the Guru."

Were it not for this manifestation of absolute Reality or pure Consciousness (which are the same) in human form, spiritual knowledge would be lost to the world. The Guru, who is a knower of Brahman, is equated in the Upanishads with Brahman Himself. Though living as a man in our midst, he is conscious of his Divine Identity. Were there none such the doctrine of the Self would remain a mere theoretical concept for the discussion of philosophers. The mind of man has to be shown the way. For this the pure Consciousness embodied in the Guru mingles with the same Consciousness awakened by him in the disciple. The Guru is ever ready to help and uplift

those who appeal to him. To disregard such help would be folly. It is vanity and pride to suppose that one's own unaided efforts will suffice. To accept a Guru does not mean accepting the guidance of another man but of pure Consciousness shining through a human psychosomatic instrument.

Spiritual tradition has always accepted the need for initiation and guidance by a Master. "What is commonly called 'self-reliance' is only ego-reliance" the Maharshi said. And again: "God, Guru and Self are the same." Only he in whom this Divine Consciousness is awakened can lead one beyond the range of human perception. There are various ways in which the Guru can initiate and guide the disciple but that he should do so has always been held necessary. Those who attack this tradition are really only attacking their own false conception of it.

The Guru has already trodden the path and can show it to the seeker. Even if he has arrived spontaneously at the goal, as did Bhagavan, he can still see and indicate the approaches to it. He may even transmit direct experience to the disciple as Sri Ramakrishna did for Vivekananda. However this can never be stabilised so long as the disciple's vasanās or inherent tendencies remain, since they drag him away again to the illusory world of sense-perception. There is no wisdom that can be given to all alike, says the Gita: "This wisdom must not be given to one who has no tapas, is not a devotee and is not in earnest." This does not mean that the Guru holds guidance or Realization back from any one. The Maharshi once said that if the Guru could simply give Realization there would not be even a cow left unrealized. Most people do not want spiritual knowledge, and it cannot be given to those who do not try to awaken it in themselves. It cannot be grasped by

* For an introduction to whom, see p. 63 of the Ashram Bulletin of our Jan. 1965 issue.

the reason. Therefore the Guru will not respond to those who question him or try to argue with him out of mere academic curiosity: "This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning."

A Guru is only for those who seek contact with him for the sake of spiritual understanding, because this means seeking contact with the Truth in one's own heart through him. One who lives at a distance and approaches him in this way may receive guidance, while one who lives near him may not know how to ask. "The real Guru is in the heart," the Maharshi said; "the task of the outer Guru is only to turn you inward to the Guru in your heart." We are told that the Divine dwells in the innermost recess of the heart, but how many of us are competent to look inward and realize it? The power of the Guru in helping one to do so is far more important than any merely verbal explanation he may give, for this latter touches only the mental understanding. "A silent Guru is very potent," said the Maharshi, "his work goes on inwardly where it is not apparent to the disciple." And he gave assurance that "as the disciple dives inwards in search of the Self the Guru will do his part."

But can this not be done without the intervention of an outer Guru? The Maharshi admitted that it can, but he added that there are very few who are so close to Enlightenment that they can dispense with the need for an outer Guru. This is because it is not a case of something new to be discovered but of the removal of obstructions to Realization of the ever-existing Self. And since these obstructions are more emotional than theoretical, rooted rather in the desires than the intellect, outer aid is usually necessary to destroy them. "Sadhana is for the removal of ignorance, which is ingrained wrong ideas. It is not for acquiring the Self, because the Self is always there, but for becoming aware of it."¹

Even though the disciple believes that Consciousness is One, he accepts the duality of Guru-disciple in order to transcend it. He serves the outer Guru in order to realize the inner. "The disciple must work inwardly, but the Guru can work both inwardly and outwardly," the Maharshi explained.

One should approach the Awakened and listen to his teaching, then dwell on it as a guidance to sadhana. When instruction comes from a Guru it carries power. Out of the relationship of Guru and disciple Realization is born, as the fire of knowledge from the former kindles in the heart of the latter.

The Upanishad says that the knower of Brahman is Brahman himself. This is an indication that if we are unable to meditate on the Formless Brahman we should meditate on a knower of Brahman. He teaches right doctrine but it is very different from the same doctrine learnt from a book. He himself is the living teaching. His presence inspires and strengthens us. His teaching has the authority of experience. It does not matter if the disciplines prescribed by the Masters vary or even if their doctrines differ on the mental plane; the essence of their teaching is the same, just as the milk from cows of different colours is all white.

"The spirit of the disciple is moribund owing to his forgetfulness of his true nature. The Guru revives him by removing his supposed identity with body and mind." The mind is apt to deny the existence of Self because Self is not an object of the senses. It can never be the object of knowledge but is itself the sole knower. Therefore a search for it by the mind can never succeed. "Logical explanations have no finality. Why look outward and explain phenomena? One should learn to attend to the knower of the phenomena." The knower of the phenomena is Reality. It just is; it is not affected by discussions or logical conclusions. It is the Grace of the Guru that enables us to realize our identity with this Reality. Since it is the Reality it is not something to be acquired in the future; it just is, now, eternally.

¹ While speaking thus of the need for an outer Guru, it is to be remembered that the Maharshi himself still acts as Guru even without a human body. (EDITOR)

So long as the disciple lives in duality but seeks to transcend it, he feels oppressed by burdens and hindered by obstacles. These are in fact mere manifestations of the tendencies in his own mind that hold him back from Enlightenment and make him cling to the duality he seeks to escape from. To such a one the Guru appears as the bearer of burdens and remover of obstructions, the destroyer of ignorance and giver of Liberation. But effort must be made by the disciple to remove the obstructions, and therefore although it is true to say that the Guru is the giver of Liberation it is also true to say that the disciple must earn it by making himself fit to receive it.

The Guru does not add to the ideas or theories with which the mind of the disciple is already cluttered up. Rather he induces cessation of thought. "The mind creates world and life and obscures Self. Becoming obscures Being." It often happened that some one came to the Maharshi with a whole list of questions that he had drawn up and, sitting before him, found not so much that the answers came as that the questions faded out and ceased to be important.

Life has plunged us into a state that can be called sleep—spiritual sleep. All our life activities are done in this sleep. The Guru is the Awakened; he does not become involved in this sleep but helps us to awaken from it.

You encounter life through a thing called 'yourself', that is through a fictitious apparatus for living. It is this which takes charge of body and senses, thinks through your mind, talks through your mouth, uses your name and mistakes itself for you. But just as it mistakes itself for you, so it mistakes the Guru for another separate self outside of you; and that is its fatal error and your salvation for the Guru, having freed himself from the clutches of this fiend, can free you from it and lead you to the experience of the One Self.

Thereby he gives a new meaning to the word 'I'. Before meeting him you attri-

buted it to this pseudo-self, but 'I' or 'Aham' is the name of Being, of God. He alone can call Himself 'I'. You only can insofar as you are One with Him. Individual human life goes on like a dream. In a dream you mistake the dream-self for 'I'. Similarly in this life you mistake the fictitious pseudo-self for 'I'. The Guru helps you to awake from this illusion. "To keep the I-thought alert is the only upadesa (teaching)." He teaches you to abide in and as the Self while apparently living in the world. "One should not lose consciousness of his 'I' under any circumstances. This is the remedy for all the ills of life." "The 'I' springs up from the centre of our being and our only concern should be with this 'I'."

The true Self is qualityless and therefore beyond description or even knowledge. It is thought that obscures it. "Give up thoughts. You need not give up anything else. The body and the comforts of life are no hindrance to Realization. The loss of the body is not Enlightenment, it is death. The loss of the ego-sense, the I-concept, is what is required." The very presence of the Guru calms down the waves of the mind and brings it to that condition of stillness in which it is simply aware.

Those who saw the Maharshi sitting in samadhi were moved and awed by it. He radiated peace as the sun radiates light. His imperturbable composure impressed some, his lively explanations others, his grace and compassion yet others; some enjoyed his conversation and some his tremendous silence. Thousands flocked for a sight of him. People felt that here was God incarnate walking on earth. He assured us when leaving the body that he was not going away. "People say that I am going away, but where can I go? I am here." Being universal, there was no going from here to there for him. Having realized that he was not this body, there was no return to any other body. He has assured us that "he who is ready for Divine Knowledge will be led to it."

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

VII

By H. W. L. POONJA

I have been a visionary from childhood. When I was only five years old I already had visions of Sri Krishna. At first I thought every one could see them. I once said to my mother : "Look ! He's standing there !" but she explained to me that only I saw him.

When I grew up I joined the army. However my desire for God-experience grew so strong that after some years I resigned and decided to devote my life to sadhana. I wanted to become a sannyasin but could not because I had a wife and children to look after.

I started visiting Swamis and asked each one point blank : "Have you seen God and can you show me God ?" I would allow no hedging. If they began to talk around it I said : "Please give me a straight yes or no." I found no one who could answer 'yes' and returned to my home in the Punjab feeling very depressed.

One day my wife was just serving my midday meal when a sadhu came and stood in the doorway. I invited him in and told her to serve him food too and then asked him whether he could direct me to a Swami who could show me God. He told me that I could find what I was looking for from Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai.

It was the first time that I had heard of the Maharshi or of Tiruvannamalai, so I wrote down both names. But how was I to get there? It was right down in the South, and my funds were almost exhausted. However, the next day I saw an advertisement in the paper for an ex-army man to run a canteen in Madras. I applied and was at once given the post and my fare paid.

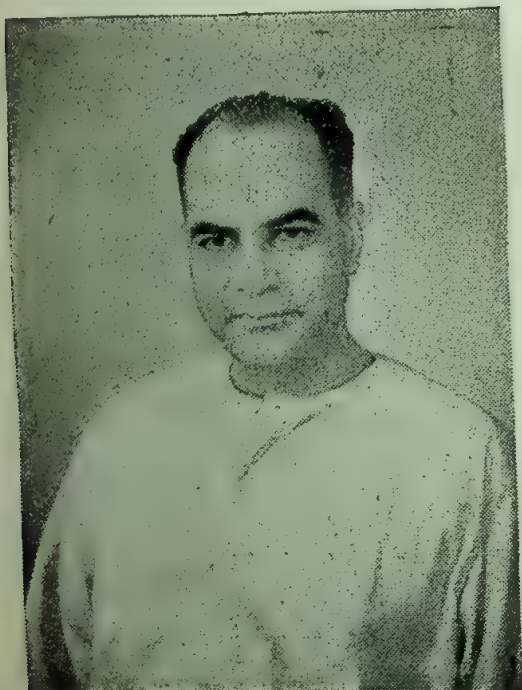
When I got to Madras I said that I must first pay a visit to Tiruvannamalai before taking up my duties. Arriving there, I dumped my bedding in the Ashram dormitory and

went into the meditation hall ; and who should I see there on the couch, but the sadhu who had visited me at my home in the Punjab !

I decided that he was a fraud. He had been travelling about India boosting himself and



had then taken a train back and arrived before me. So I got up and left the hall. I got my bedding and was just putting it back on the horse-cart that had brought me from the station when a devotee asked me why I was leaving so soon. I told him and he said : "It must be a mistake, because the Maharshi has never left this place since he



H. W. L. Poonja

first came nearly fifty years ago. Either it was some one else you saw or he appeared to you by supernatural power." So I was back to the hall.

As soon as I had an opportunity to see Bhagavan alone I asked him my usual question. I added : "It's a bargain. I am willing to pay any price, even my life, but your part of the bargain is to enable me to see God."

At first he sat silent, but I said : "That's no good ; I don't understand silence. Please give me a straight answer."

Then he said : "I can enable you rather to be God than to see God."

That puzzled me. I had very little understanding then.

A few days later I went for a walk in the rough country at the foot of the north slope of Arunachala and fell into a state of ecstasy during which I again had a vision of Sri Krishna. When I got back I told Bhagavan. He asked me : "Can you see Krishna now ?"

I said, "No ; only when I have a vision."

So he said : "What is the use of a God who comes and goes ? If he is a real God he should be with you always."

That shocked me. Again I almost lost faith in him, but some of the devotees explained to me. Before I left for Madras I asked Bhagavan for a mantra but he did not give me one. I asked him for permission to take sannyas, but he refused.

However, shortly after my return to Madras he appeared to me in a dream and gave me a mantra. Soon after this I had a vision of God in human form. This was followed by a great change in me. I lost interest in all the ritual and incantations and breathing exercises that I had been doing up to then. For instance, I used to get up at three o'clock in the morning to attend to my statue of Sri Krishna. All such things ceased to interest me. I was very worried about this. I thought it meant I had become an atheist.

At the first opportunity I went to Tiruvannamalai. I told Bhagavan about the change that had come over me and how I had lost interest in all the ritual that I had been practising regularly for so many years past.

Bhagavan looked steadily at me for some time and then said something to be in Tamil which I was told, on enquiry, meant "You, that is me, that is Bhagavan." These words sank into my heart and I experienced the most wonderful feeling of bliss I had ever known.

It was from this time that I began to understand Bhagavan and his teaching.

SACRIFICE

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

All life is branded
With the red cross of sacrifice, the stamp
Of His celestial choosing.
Who shall escape
The sacrifice demanded
Or what evade His high intent, refusing
To bend upon the altar?
All destiny doth bear a lurid lamp
Towards it, every instant is a tramp -
Whose footfalls dare not falter
Along the lonesome journey towards the goal.
All form is a keen sacrifice of soul
Even as the soul, deep sacrifice of Him
Who first descending to its state assumed
The ignorant and many-gloomed
Pathetic role
Of feature, face and limb.
When out of the unthrobbing womb of blank
Creation stirred into a visible Whole
Of complex separations, when He drank
The poison-cup of life and beauty, dim
With distances in time and space, each speck
Retained a need of sacrifice to check
The total devastation born of self,
A need of God in man, of man in God.
Behold! how, from the dothood of an elf
Into high company of seraphim
Each thing and creature gradually doth plod
Its heavenward way, and each
Drunk with envisioned power beyond its reach.
It will not let one atom dwell aloof
In idle selfhood, roseal ring
Of isolated dreaming, but as proof
Of indestructible Oneness, toil and bring
Collective bliss into the depth of everything.
O sacrifice! thou art the holy voice
Resounding everywhere through centuries
Like royal music, making life rejoice
Through processes of yielding. With what ease
Thou flowest through the universe, a wide
Slow victory on every side

Planting its bannered flames of harmonies.
 Who does not bend to thee of his own choice
 Shall be compelled, in irresistible awe
 Suddenly, at one stroke of bleeding fire,
 To swear allegiance to thy sacrificial law.
 Naught shall remain
 Static, but through the sheerest act of pain,
 That men call life, they shall aspire
 To high existence ever grown to higher.
 Beauty demands as price
 An ecstasy of linked sacrifice
 Unending on the planes of time and space ;
 The humble attitude of yielding gives
 Chaste masterhood of heaven to all that lives,
 Heaven's sacrifice of cloud hath filled the face
 Of flowers with sweetness, that of the white lamb
 How flashed the rubied lustre
 In the round eyeballs of the tawny beast. . . .
 My God ! Thy sacrifice hath spread the feast
 Of ocean-heave and constellated cluster,
 Granting me knowledge that 'I am'.

DEATH

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

"He hath revenge on Death, for he died well,"*
 A poet wrote in life's far distant spring,
 Stumbling on truth. Death's fabled heaven and hell
 And drearier prospect yet the new times bring
 Of a blank nothingness hedge like a ring
 The seeming self whose lifelong passing bell
 Tolls in his ears, although the mind may cling
 To fragile hopes the gathering years dispel.

But "Die before you die" the Prophet said :
 Give up the seeming self that from the world
 Falls into death ; remains that Self instead
 • Wherein earth, heaven and hell like dreams are furled.

The world in you, not you in it, has died,
 For That you are and no thing else beside.

* Quoted from a poem by Denzil Batchelor.

PARADISE AND NIRVANA

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

"And for him who fears the station of his Lord there are two gardens. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? In each of them green branches. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? In both of them are two fountains flowing. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? In both of them are two pairs of every fruit. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? Therein shall they recline upon couches lined with silk brocade and the fruits of the two gardens shall be within reach. Which then of the boons of your Lord will you reject? Therein shall be maidens shy of glance, never previously possessed by man or jinn. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? They shall be like rubies and pearls. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? What is the reward of excellence if not excellence? Which of your Lord's boons will you reject?"¹

"There is, monks, a condition where there is neither extension nor motion, nor the plane of infinite space nor that of infinite consciousness, nor of the void nor of neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness, neither this world nor another, neither sun nor moon. Here, monks, I say, there is neither a coming nor a going nor yet a remaining, neither a falling nor a rising. It is not fixed yet it does not move. It is not based on anything. That indeed is the end of ill.

"There is, monks, an unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, and were it not, monks, for this unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, no escape could be shown here for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded."²

The former of these two promised states is central to Islam, a theme running through the Qur'an; the latter is the very basis of Buddhism. It could never be maintained

that they are the same. The former is the state of paradise enjoyed by the beatified individual; the latter is what remains on the transcendence and dissolution of the individuality.

Neither is a state simply to believe in as happening after death: nothing happens that is not earned. And what is earned can be earned as well before death as after. States of realization attained during this life are equivalent to paradises attained after it. Perfect Self-Realization is Nirvana.

Perhaps the first question to settle is whether the descriptions of paradise contained in the Qu'ran and in other religions (including Buddhism) are symbolical. The crude exoteric Muslim would probably feel cheated if told so. Like the materialist in every religion, he believes physical forms, to be more 'real' than subtle. And he feels entitled to a 'real' paradise, his *huris* real women. However, while dreaming he takes the dream forms for real, and in paradise he will doubtless take the paradisaal forms for real. The Sufis certainly regard the promises as symbolical. The following is a commentary on the above quotation by Ibn Arabi, one of the most famous of the Sufi philosophers:

... "And for him who fears the station of his Lord means for him who fears His session in judgment over him, inasmuch as He is ever vigilant and makes man depend upon Him . . . there are two gardens, one being the garden of the soul and the other of the heart, inasmuch as fear is one of the qualities of the soul when illuminated by the light of the heart. In each of them are green branches through the branching out of those boughs which are the forces and qualities which bring forth the leaves of actions and virtues which in turn bring forth the fruits of the sciences and the states of spiritual contemplation . . . In both of them are two

¹ Qur'an, VI, 46-51.

² Uddana, 80-81.

fountains of particular and universal perceptions, flowing to them from the Garden of the Spirit and causing to grow in them the fruits of the things perceived and the manifestation of the Qualities. Of every fruit, of the delightful objects of perception, two pairs, one particular, being known and familiar, and the other universal and strange; for every universal idea that the heart perceives has a particular image in the soul, nor is there anything perceived by the soul that has not its archetype in the heart. *Therein shall they recline upon couches lined with silk brocade*, for the side facing downward, that is towards the soul, is brocaded with the forms of pious deeds springing from the virtues of character and nobility of qualities and excellence of endowments; and the outer side, facing the Spirit, is of the finest silk, symbolising the manifestations of the holy lights and the fineness of the celestial boons and of the states of contemplation that may come to one through intuitions of sacred wisdom and knowledge . . . *And the fruits of the two gardens shall be within reach*: the objects of perception are as near as they wish . . . they perceive them and gather them, and immediately others of the same kind spring up in their place . . . *Therein shall be maidens shy of glance*, glancing away from such heavenly souls as approach them in their station and from such as are beneath them, whether heavenly or earthly. . . None of them looks higher than the station of her consort or demands a perfection beyond his, so that her excellence either matches his or is inferior to it. Otherwise she would pass beyond his garden and be exalted above his station and would not be shy of glance or satisfied with her marriage to him and the joys of intercourse with him and his guardianship over her. *Never previously possessed by man by any human soul, being created especially for their consorts and essentially holy, so that none who are attached to the physical self can attain to them; or jinn by any power of fancy or any spirit veiled in base form. They shall be like rubies and pearls*: those of the huris who are in the Garden of the soul are compared

to rubies because of the ruby's beauty and limpidity and glow and brilliance and also its red colour, which corresponds to the colour of the soul; and those who are in the Garden of the Heart are compared to small pearls because of their whiteness and luminosity . . . *What is the reward of excellence*, that is of worship and concentration, if not excellence? in reward, through the acquirement of perfection and attainment to the two gardens here spoken of."

In a later passage of his commentary on this same sura he also defines the huris as symbolising "pure lights and unalloyed visions wherein is no trace of evil or any possibility of it, lovely with the manifestation of the divine Beauty and Majesty and the excellence of the Divine Qualities."

However, there can only be symbolism so long as there is something to symbolise, that is so long as the individual being continues to exist. Crude forms can symbolise subtle, but nothing can symbolise Nirvana, nothing except the Void, nothing except nothing.

Paradise is the proximate goal, Nirvana the ultimate. This is universally recognized in Buddhism. For instance, it is stated by the Dalai Lama in his article on Tibetan Buddhism in *The Mountain Path* of April 1964. It is recognized in Islam only by the Sufis. Abu Said declared that: "The world is the road that leads to the abode of love, whilst paradise is a stage on the way. The enlightened lover discards the one and transcends the other."

In Buddhism there is any amount of teaching about paradise, which, indeed, must be the goal for the many. However, for those who aspire, it keeps in mind that the ultimate goal is Nirvana, which is as far beyond paradise as it is beyond this world, being immeasurably beyond either. The most illuminating reference, as showing not only the Buddhist acceptance of paradise but attitude towards it is in a story that I will quote, with Arthur Osborne's comments on it from his 'Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism'.³

³ pp. 111-113, published by Rider & Co., London

"The Buddhist attitude to the heavenly worlds is the same as the Hindu; that is, as the Maharshi has been heard to say: 'They are as real as this world here.' As long as one is obsessed with the reality of one's ego and therefore of this world, so long will the law of cause and effect hold and shape one's conditions in posthumous worlds. But it is better to abide in the Self and not to worry about this world or the next. There is a story that illustrates this. Several years after his Enlightenment messengers came to the Buddha from his father requesting him to honour his home town also with a visit. He did so and was not without honour in his own home. In fact, a large number of the nobles renounced the world and followed him. Among these was his half-brother Nanda (not to be confused with his cousin Ananda, the beloved disciple). Nanda, however, was half-hearted about it. He had made the renunciation on the eve of being married to a beautiful girl and proclaimed heir to the throne and he fell to brooding over all he had missed. Seeing that he had no zeal, the Lord asked him what was the matter and whether he was not already thinking of abandoning the path and returning to the life of the world.

"Nanda replied: 'My Lord, when I left home a Sakya girl, the loveliest in the land, looked back at me with her hair half combed and said, 'May you soon be back, young sir.' It is because I am continually thinking of her that I have no zest for the Brahma path but have come to dislike it and wish to give up the training and return to a worldly life.'

"The Buddha then took him by the arm and immediately the grove in which they were standing disappeared and they found themselves in the celestial world of the devas. As many as five hundred dove-footed celestial nymphs were attending on Sakra, the Lord of the devas. The Buddha asked Nanda which he found more charming and attractive, the Sakya girl who was the loveliest in the land or these five hundred dove-footed nymphs.

"He replied: 'My Lord, compared with them the Sakya girl, although the loveliest

in the land, would look like a monkey with its nose and ears cut off. She is not worth a particle of them. She can't be compared with them. The five hundred dove-footed nymphs are incomparably more charming and attractive.'

"Thereupon the Lord took Nanda by the arm again and they found themselves back in the grove as before.

"Such a story might come from almost any religion; it is the sequel to it that illustrates the spirit of Buddhism. The rumour spread among the monks that Nanda was treading the path for the sake of heavenly nymphs and that the Buddha had promised him five hundred dove-footed maids. Thereupon they began to despise and mock him, calling him a mercenary. This so shamed him that he shut himself up alone and devoted himself with all his energy to the path, not allowing his thoughts to stray either to the Sakya girl or the nymphs or to his companions or anything else, with the result that he soon attained Enlightenment.

"Were the nymphs real? As real as the Sakya maid; but what is reality? That is the whole object of the quest."

This makes the difference clear. Buddhism as originally propounded directs a man straight to Nirvana, ignoring or deprecating the wayside stations called 'paradise'. It is based on the doctrine of anatta, 'no-ego'; and if there is no ego there can be no conditions of the ego, neither paradise nor hell; only conditionlessness, suchness, that which is. Islam, on the other hand, as taught in the Qur'an, turns men's minds to the possibility of higher states of the individuality and the danger of lower ones. Its doctrinal basis is 'Islam', which means 'submission' and thereby recognizes the existence of some one to submit. Buddhism proclaims the direct path to the ultimate Goal; Islam the striving to the wayside station of a beatified individuality.

During its later development each religion has to some extent developed the aspect that was originally lacking. There are many Buddhists who have neither the understanding nor the will to seek Nirvana, and for them

indirect paths and techniques have been fabricated—the Pure Land School, the devotional invocation of Amitabha, the elaborate ritual and symbolism of Tantrism, with its heavens and hells.

However, such developments are not altogether in tune with the native genius of the religion. However absorbing they may be, and however productive of the results they aim at, they diverge from the pure spirit of Buddhism in that they implicitly overlook the basic doctrine of anatta, 'no-ego', which all the early schools of Buddhism made their sheet-anchor. Similarly, pure Tawhid, the Oneness of Being, and Ittihad or Identity is outside the Islamic tradition of submission, implying some one to submit and a God to whom to submit. It can sustain itself only among the very few who understand and on the basis of its inherent truth and of subtle interpretations of a dualistic scripture. Muslims in general are bound to reject it.

Islam officially cannot recognize it. Indeed, there is the historical case of Mansur Al Hallaj who, in a state of ecstasy, proclaimed 'Ana'l Haqq', 'I am the Truth' (which, to a Muslim, carries the connotation 'I am God') and was crucified for it.

For those who seek paradise there is guidance in Islam and Buddhism alike. For those who aspire to the ultimate Goal the guidance in Islam is less clear. Sufis find concealed references to Nirvana in certain cryptic verses of the Qur'an, but there is no outspoken recognition of it. A Sufi might speak of paradise as a stage on the way, but the Qur'an speaks of it (for example, in the passage from sura LVII which I quoted in 'The Lesser and Greater Jihad' in our issue of July 1964) as "the supreme achievement". It is noteworthy in this connection that some of the Sufi saints claimed to have gone beyond the Prophet; but that is a subject for another article.

A WONDER

By PRANAV

I have sought Thee
 Ever and anon ;
 I have dreamt of Thee
 In my slumber ;
 I have wandered
 Long and lone
 In search of Thee ;
 Yet I have not
 Known Thee.
 I try to spell
 Thy name.
 But who will tell me
 Who Thou art ?

THE METHODS AND STAGES OF CH'AN BUDDHISM

By CHARLES LUK¹

Underlying my humble attempt to present Ch'an Buddhism as practised in my country is my belief that it is dying out in the East, where the present wave of materialism is sweeping away our precious heritage of spiritual values, while on the other hand many Westerners have already grown weary of the material civilization firmly established among them, which was the cause of the last two world wars, as it is to-day of the stresses and disturbances throughout the world. I believe also that there are Westerners whose good karma has caused them to be reborn in countries where peace and security now prevail so that they can resume their practice of Mahayana and Ch'an Buddhism which they began in former lives. This belief of mine has been confirmed by interviews with some of my Western readers whose ability to digest the doctrine of the Mind was amazing, far exceeding my expectation.

The practice of Ch'an Buddhism can be successful only if the student is sincere and eager to learn and is ready to give up his pride and all preconceived ideas in order to cultivate the two great Buddhist virtues of modesty and humility. He should acquire some knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Nidanas or links in the chain of existence, the Eightfold Path, the Four Infinite Minds and the Five Precepts. I say only 'some knowledge' because it is impossible for a beginner to understand their full import, which can be gathered only when he makes real progress in his training. It is of paramount importance for him to observe the rules of discipline (*silā*), which are indispensable to still the mind so that it can reach the state of meditation (*dhyāna*) and thereby cause the wisdom (*prajñā*) which is inherent in him to manifest. The

threefold support of *silā*, *dhyāna* and *prajñā* is likened to a tripod which cannot stand if one of its legs is missing.

It is true that Ch'an surpasses all other methods of training in Buddhism, but that does not imply that the practiser can dispense with the Buddha's teachings as given in the Sutras. Especially in this Dharma-ending age, when enlightened Masters are no longer easily to be come by, must he rely on the scriptures to adjust and perfect the various stages of meditation. He should study the Diamond and Heart Sutras, the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, the Sutra of Complete Enlightenment and the Surangama Sutra² (especially the final chapter of this last, on the fifty mental states created by the five aggregates) in order to avoid falling into false theory and wrong paths that can vitiate all his efforts.

Ch'an practice begins with the wiping out of thoughts which agitate the mind. The wandering mind is in constant search of sense data to preserve its illusory existence which vanishes in the absence of externals. Therefore the mind and its objects are the two poles of a duality which splits our undivided Buddha-nature and throws us into unnecessary transmigration in samsara.

The ancients lived very simply and did not have so many attachments as we do, so when they were told by their masters to look into their minds they could do so without great difficulty. This explains why the Second Chinese Patriarch, on hearing a few words from Bodhidharma, succeeded in realizing the non-existence of mind and was thereby enlightened, and why Hui Neng realized Bodhi simply on being told by his

¹ For a note on Charles Luk see our issue of October 1964.—Editor.

² My translation of the Surangama Sutra has been sent to London for publication by Rider & Co. I hope that it will come out soon so that it can safeguard Western students of Mahayana and Ch'an Buddhism against mistakes in their meditation.—Author.

master to develop a mind that does not abide anywhere.

Later, however, life grew complex with the advance of material civilization, which increased man's attachment to things, thereby diminishing his spirituality. To cope with this reduced ability to understand, the masters invented the kung an (Japanese koan) technique, the aim of which is to strip the practiser of seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing, so that his mind can be stilled and reach the state of *dhyana*, which brings *prajna* and is thus set free from hindrances.

There are many kung ans to be found in books. The one which was perhaps the most popular in China and is now used by most Japanese roshis (Zen gurus) is: "A monk asked Chao Chou, 'Has a dog got the Buddha-nature?' Chao Chou replied, 'No!'" In this kung an the stress is on the word 'No!'. The student is urged to look into this No and believes that if he does so successfully he will be enlightened. So day and night he concentrates his mind on this No. If he thinks: "The Buddha says that all living beings, including dogs, have the Buddha-nature," even before he tries to argue with Chao Chou he knocks against this categorical No which already looms before him. If he tries to accept Chao Chou's interpretation, which is definitely contrary to the Buddha's teaching, as soon as he tries to agree one way or the other he again knocks against this unconditional No. So in whatever direction he may turn to solve this seemingly insoluble kung an he knocks his head against this implacable No, which blocks every exit and does not allow his mind to go further. Thus he finds himself as though imprisoned in a circular wall made of countless Nos which close in to isolate his monkey-mind and to disengage it from externals in a process which, to his great discomfort, may last for months or years. That is why a practiser of Ch'an sometimes looks wild and stupid during his training, for his monkey-mind is turned upside-down; he does not see anything in front of him but hears only the sound of the word

No. His breath seems to be choked and he is mindless even of eating and drinking. When this state has been reached is the moment when the kung an takes effect. His wandering mind, which was sharp and agile before, is now like a wild beast trapped and completely exhausted by its long efforts to regain its freedom. When the monkey has exhausted its ingenuity in struggling with the word No it gradually weakens and becomes impotent. This is precisely the aim of the training and the Enlightened Master notes with satisfaction the result thus achieved.

The mind thus exhausted is compared to a stone girl on the point of breaking into a dance or a wooden man about to burst into song, for the death of the wandering mind is automatically followed by the resurrection of the clean and pure mind. The pupil suddenly realizes that the aim of the kung an is neither the search for dog nor Buddha nor even for the No; and being thus set free from the discrimination and discernment caused by these three empty words, his mind leaps above the motion of 'yes' and 'no,' 'is' and 'is not,' 'Buddha' and 'dog,' beyond all contraries and relativities, and reaches the transcendental state which is inconceivable and inexpressible and which he alone can appreciate but not communicate to others, just as he who drinks water can alone know if it is cold or warm.

If the practiser fails to make progress after long training with this kung an it may mean that he is not serious in his efforts, but it may also mean that the kung an is not the right one for him. In this case he should try another in order to avoid wasting precious time. Another popular one is: "All things can be reduced to the One; to what is this One reduced?" There are many others to be found in the books.³

When men of high spiritual potentiality became still more rare, the Masters once

³ While this indicates that an aspirant can change his kung an in case of need, it also indicates that they are not to be changed lightly or frequently. In fact its real implication is that it is not the answer to the kung an that is of importance but the effect that meditating on it has on the mind of the aspirant.—Editor.

more changed their tactics and devised the Hua T'ou technique which consists in giving rise to a feeling of doubt (*i-ch'ing*) about who the repeater of the Buddha's name is.⁴ Here the accent is on the word 'who' which supports this essential doubt, arising from the practiser's eagerness to find out what it is that invokes the Buddha. He reasons that his transient body, including brain, intellect and organic functions, is impermanent, coming to an end when he dies, and therefore cannot be used to realize permanence, and that there must be something permanent at the root of all his activities. It is this which he seeks. Thus his doubt or quest becomes greater and greater, engulfing him and his surroundings to form a homogeneous block which no worldly thoughts and feeling can enter. His monkey-mind cannot move in this inner solitude, which will suffocate it. And its death will automatically be followed by the resurrection of his pure and clean mind. This sense of doubt or quest should be maintained throughout his training until he attains Enlightenment.

Not only worldly thoughts and feelings but also any visions which may appear during his training will be demolished by this *i-ch'ing*, which is used as a weapon to prevent them entering the mind. Hence Lin Chi says: "If you meet a Buddha, cut him down; if you meet an arahat, cut him down; if you meet your parents, cut them down; if you meet your relatives, cut them down. Only thus will you be liberated. And if you are not held by externals you will be liberated and completely independent."⁵ For all visions conceived by the sense organs are illusory and they can never compare with the inconceivable and ineffable Tathagata state.

Mahayana teaching lists fifty-six stages of Bodhisattva development up to Buddhahood, through which an aspirant must pass before achieving complete Enlightenment.

⁴ It will be seen that *i-ch'ing*, although translated as 'doubt' is to all intents and purposes the same that the Maharshi taught under the name of Self-enquiry.—Editor.

⁵ See *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, second series, p. 125, Rider & Co., London—Author.

However, the Ch'an method, which is a short-cut to Enlightenment, demands only correct interpretation of subject and object, substance and function, host and guest, prince and minister, with their integration into the Undivided Whole or Mean, which is inclusive of both and from which both spring. This is achieved by demolishing first the coarse, objective sense data and then the coarse, subjective sense organs by means of the *i-ch'ing* described above, which is indeed a sharp weapon which cuts them both down and exposes their nullity or unreality. After that has been achieved the same technique serves to disengage the subjective awareness of the void from its object.⁶ When the void ceases to exist, the subjective ego is replaced by a subtle awareness of the all-embracing state of pure and clean voidness which can easily be mistaken for Nirvana.

In fact it is the primordial state of the mind when it was stirred by the first thought since time without beginning. He who has attained it is represented as a man sitting on top of a hundred-foot pole from which he has to make a step forward to realize Bodhi. But to mistake this state for Nirvana implies retention of the subtle subjective ego and its objective realization or Dharma. These are the two last hindrances and are to be overcome with the same technique of *i-ch'ing*. At this stage it is easier to demolish the subtle ego than the subtle Dharma, for this latter is so wonderful and alluring that it cannot easily be relinquished.⁷

If the aspirant continues relentlessly with his *i-ch'ing*, this subtle Dharma, which is in reality only an illusion, will vanish and, released from the last hindrance, he will overleap both phenomenon and noumenon to reach the absolute state of samadhi in which the *i-ch'ing* itself will be transmuted into the Buddha's all-knowledge or Sarvajna. This is the absolute Tathagata state.

⁶ In this and what follows one is reminded of the Maharshi's reply when told that an aspirant came up against the Void: "Ask yourself who it is that sees the Void."—Editor.

⁷ In this sense 'Dharma' would correspond with the 'Anand-kosha' of Hinduism.—Editor.

In practice technical terms found in the sutras such as those translated as 'sense organs', 'sense data', 'form', 'voidness' 'ego', 'dharma', etc., are often avoided so as to safeguard the aspirant from making a fetish of words, which can be a great hindrance. An aspirant does not necessarily pass through the stages mentioned in the same order, for a person's progress depends partly on his individual nature; for instance, one may be more attached to ego-sense than to dharma and another more to dharma. Hence Lin Chi says: "Sometimes the subject is snatched away but not the object, sometimes the object but not the subject, sometimes both and sometimes neither."⁸

⁸ See *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, second series, p. 92, Rider & Co., London—Author.

The aspirant will experience major or minor satoris (awakenings) during his progress on the path. These will reveal his mistakes to him and will also light up the deeper meanings of the Mahayana sutras anew at each re-reading. They will show him the living meanings of Ch'an sayings, dialogues (mondos) and kung ans (koans), until he embodies all of them, to become the Dharma itself, with the Three Gems, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, intermingled in his self-nature. This is the state of Wonderful Enlightenment which will bring him out into the open to enlighten and deliver all living beings in fulfilment of the Bodhisattva vow taken at the outset of his quest.

METANOESIS

By WEI WU WEI

Every question concerns you looking or not-looking, doing or not-doing, knowing or not-knowing;

Never the thing (object) looked-at, done, known; never *its* being or not-being.

As long as there is you *doing*, it makes no difference whether there is doing or not-doing—for both are doing by you.

Paravritti, *metanoesis*, the "180 degree turn-over", is not a turning over by a "doing or not-doing". you, a turning from positive to negative; it is not done by "a you". It is not done by any other "entity" either. It is not done at all. It is the timeless, unceasing prajñatic functioning of our dhyānic non-being that becomes phenomenally present when there is neither doing nor non-doing, i.e. when there is "fasting of the mind".

It is not the object that is or is-not, but the cogniser of the thing-that-either-is-or-is not—that *neither is nor is-not as a cogniser*.

All looking, doing, cognising is the same process as looking for an "I" (the looker, doer, cogniser) as an object. Why? because a you ("I") is looking etc., and also because

every object ultimately is I. The looking for an "I" as an object is the looking that is all looking for all objects; so is the not-looking for an "I" as an object the not-looking for any object whatever.

But it is the looker, rather than the object, that neither is nor is-not. Always, always, in every case and context.¹ Therefore it is only when you cease looking that the total absence of the looking-you can be present—and that is the "180 degree turn".

Who is looking? As long as a "who" looks, objects can be seen only as objects, and a looking "who" cannot be replaced by WHO? that neither is nor is-not, as long as he is looking.

Only in the absence of both looking and not-looking can a looking, that neither is nor is-not looking, be present. And such presence is you ("I").

Is not that the message of the Diamond and Heart Sutras?

¹ The object also, of course, which phenomenally either is or is-not, noumenally neither is nor is-not, but only because it is integral in its subject.

ROHATSU

By GARY SNYDER

Rohatsu is the name in Rinzai Zen for the meditation week (*sesshin*) held every year from 1 to 8 December. In China and Japan, it is believed that Gautama achieved Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree at dawn on December 8; and in commemoration of this, Zen monks sit in meditation virtually without break for seven days, finishing at dawn on the eighth. This is by far the most severe *sesshin* of the Zen year.

Three a.m.—a far bell
 coming closer:
fling up useless futon on the shelf;
outside, ice-water in the hand & wash the

Ko the bird-head, Silent, skinny,
swiftly cruise the room with
salt plum tea.

Bell from the hondo chanting sutras. Gi:-
deep bell, small bell, wooden drum.
 sanzen at four,
 kneel on icy polisht boards in line;

Shukuza rice and pickles
barrel and bucket,
dim watt bulb.
 till day-break nap upright.
 sweep

garden and hall.
frost outside

 wind thru walls

At eight the lecture bell. high chair.
Ke helps the robe—red, gold,
black lacquer in the shadow
sun & cold

Saiza a quarter to ten
soup and rice dab on the bench
feed the hungry ghosts,
 back in the hall by noon.

two-o'clock sanzen
three o'clock sutras
four o'clock bellywarmer
 boiled up soup-rice mush.
 dinging and scuffing. out'back smoke,
 and talk.

At dusk, at five,
black robes draw into the hall.
 stiff joints, sore knees bend
 the jiki pads by with his incense lit,
 bells,
 wood block crack.
& stick slips round the room
on soft straw sandals.
seven, sanzen
tea, and a leaf-shaped candy.
kinhin at eight with folded hands—
 single-file racing in flying robes
 leaning wake—
nine o'clock one more sanzen
ten, hot noodles,
three bowls each.

Sit until midnight. chant.
 make three bows and pull the futon down
 roll in the bed
 a black.

A far bell coming closer

— (From Six Years).

BUDDHIST MEDITATION IN THE WEST

By L. H. EWELS

If Buddhism is to be of practical value in the West, what is needed in addition to adequate translations of the scriptures and plenty of books to explain them and their application so that all kinds of people may learn about them? In English at least there are ample books. Most other European languages carry a sufficient supply of information. Clearly the vital need is to apply the teaching itself, first and at all times in the ethical field, but whenever possible to undergo a course of strict meditation under the supervision of a fully trained bhikkhu at a meditation centre. This requirement has long been appreciated in the East where ordinary lay folk attend the local monasteries or wats on the Buddha memorial day in May each year and in between go to the various meditation centres for laity. It remains for the West to establish and maintain similar meditation centres and to encourage or at least assist young men who show promise in such work to spend some years in an eastern wat. A useful start has been made at the centre of the English-speaking world with the foundation of such a Meditation Centre in the heart of rural England in 1963. It is most important for the basic principles as taught by the Buddha to be kept free of concepts preached in other religions. In practice the meditator must place his former beliefs on the shelf, as it were, for the time being, while he or she gains first-hand experience of the psychosomatic processes within.

Buddhist meditation flows in two main channels; one of these trains the mind to be attentive to a group of processes which go to make up one's being. This may entail quietly observing the breath entering and leaving the tip of the nose, without any attempt to control the breathing; or bare attention may be directed and held (if one practises steadily) to the manner in which

one's feet are slowly pacing the ground; or one may be the silent watcher of events going on around one, without letting the mind follow its normal inclination to wander among its egotistical amusements. The other channel of discipline is to try to hold the attention at a given position within the body, catching the mind and bringing it back to the given spot each time it displays its mercurial tendencies to dart away. Also an external object may be set by the teacher as the concentration exercise appropriate to the pupil, because the experienced teacher soon recognizes the kind of mind he is helping to train and can vary the exercises according to need from day to day.

The writer was privileged to attend the English centre soon after it opened and can vouch for its efficacy under the guidance of a competent monk of Canadian origin who was trained in Burma and Thailand. At the time of writing the monk's own teacher, an acknowledged expert in his own land, has arrived from Thailand to give further instruction in meditation. More of this kind of help is needed in bringing the Buddha-Dharma from the East to the West, because when practical-minded Europeans and Americans begin to see for themselves that the system works and is non-violent, that it is free from bigotry and crusading, they will not be satisfied for long with lectures and books but will want to get on with the job. It is sometimes held that the doctrine of rebirth implies endless ages in which to please oneself. Some disservice to the truth has been rendered by occult and mystical movements which tell their adherents that each 'reincarnation' is higher or better than the previous one. Analysis in the light of the Abhidhamma reveals that too many causes and effects interweave with the energies which make up the human being to assume any such thing. Until the supramundane

Path is entered and one leaves behind forever attachment to rituals, images and beliefs, the questing mind can only transmit its characteristics at death, good and evil together. How many of us realise that we are in danger of ending our lives as worse characters than when we began?

Anyone who has made a careful study of Buddhism and Buddhist meditation knows

that there is much more to the Noble Eight-fold Path than has been indicated in the foregoing paragraphs. Hundreds of volumes do not contain it all. Few meditators attain the goal in one lifetime. Nevertheless the start has to be made if suffering is to be overcome. The start must some time be made NOW and when the Enlightenment comes it will be in earthly life as with all the great spiritual beings known to man.

FIRST BE STABILISED IN THE SELF

From a record by ALAN CHADWICK*

Before I came to India I had read of people who had had flashes of what they called 'cosmic consciousness'. I asked Bhagavan about this and whether it was possible after having gained Self-realization to lose it again. He took a copy of *Kaivalya Navanita* and told the interpreter to read a page of it to me. This showed that at first it was quite possible and even probable. As long as the least desire or tie was left a person would be pulled back into the phenomenal world by it, Bhagavan explained. After all, it is only the vasanas or inherent tendencies that prevent us from being always in our natural state; and vasanas are not got rid of all of a sudden. One may have worked them out in a previous incarnation and have little left to do in the present life, but in any case they have to go.

I was reminded of Ramakrishna who said that as long as a single desire remained unfulfilled one had to go on being reborn in order to fulfil it. He said he himself had always wanted to wear a silk cloth and a gold ring and smoke a hookah. One day he asked Mathura Nath to obtain these things for him. Then he sat on the banks of the Ganges dressed in silk, wearing his gold ring and smoking his hookah. After a while he got up, threw his ring into the river, flung his silk cloth on the ground and stamped and spat on it and broke his hookah. He had fulfilled his desire and no longer had any wish to do these things again.

Ramakrishna knew the truth about Self-realization but did not want it. He used to pray that he should not lose his identity (ego) but should still be able to enjoy the bliss of the Mother. "I want to taste the sugar, not to become the sugar," he would say.

Bhagavan explained that although there are no stages in Realization there are on the way to it. Or perhaps it would be better to say that there are stages of descent from the Absolute to objectivisation. Chit or pure Awareness projects its light down through Mahat, known in the West as 'cosmic consciousness' to the ahankara or ego. Thus manas or mind arises, followed by the conception of body and world. What appears as a process to us is just a shadow for the Self-realized being. The Self is one and indivisible. There is no becoming; there is only being.

Bhagavan advised his disciples not to take on the onerous duty of being a guru. It would only lead to trouble. Their disciples would expect all sorts of impossible things of them and look up to them as Jnanis, and in trying to satisfy the disciples they would resort to hypocrisy. Even if one could work miracles it was not a good thing to do, as they would deflect him from his true aim of Self-realization.

* For whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of January 1964.

JOEL GOLDSMITH—AN APPRECIATION

By I. G. SCHULTZ

Once when the German philosopher Schopenhauer was taking an evening walk in a cemetery the caretaker, wanting to close the cemetery, asked him to leave, adding the question: "Who are you, sir?" The philosopher answered: "My dear friend, if only I knew that myself!"

Many people have put this question without finding the answer and for centuries mankind has been enquiring into it. The Sages and the illumined know, but when asked their answer is only: "Be silent!" "What is truth?" asked Pilate; but the Master gave no answer, he remained silent.

The human mind cannot grasp the eternal Truth hidden behind the veil of appearances. Even if it were possible there would be no words to express it. Nevertheless everybody can approach Truth more or less and understand something of the meaning and aim of life if he earnestly wishes to.

This search for Truth or God can be compared to climbing a mountain. The experienced mountaineer lays aside all superfluous luggage to avoid burdening himself. Let us do the same, taking only the cloak of desirelessness and the staff of silence. And yet how hard it is to leave behind all desires: the sick long for health, the poor prosperity, the sad for solace, and so on. All this is a drag on the path to the summit, the path to God-realization, to the goal which the illumined indicate, to which the American mystic Joel Goldsmith refers when he says: "I only long for knowing Thee aright. My God, reveal Thyself to me. In Thy presence there is safety, peace and joy." (from 'The Art of Meditation'). Speaking of the difficulties, he says: "In the midst of any trial or tribulation try to understand that God is seeking you to bring you back home to Him, not in death but in life eternal. Realize that this very pain, unhappiness or lack is but the



Joel Goldsmith

sense of separation from God and immediately rest back in the assurance of His presence." (from 'Our Spiritual Resources').

It is not by our own merit that we reach the supreme goal or even touch the hem of the garment. We attain by Grace as a gift from the Most High, when we are mature enough to do so. We do not know when the moment will be. It is not the result of our strife. Joel Goldsmith says: "When we struggle and battle with the enemy, whether that enemy is physical and external or mental and internal, we do not win any victories. The real victories are won when we use no

power and do not fight our opposition but rest in the knowledge that all opposition destroys itself. The battle is not yours . . . stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. We need not fight or struggle. We need only be still." It is like the ascent of a mountain. We do not know when we shall reach the summit, but the higher we mount the more the valley fog dissolves till we attain a level where the veil parts. The darkness of the valley is transcended and the peak rises before us in all its splendour. The same is our experience on the spiritual Mountain Path, to whose summit Goldsmith refers when he says: "God is my fortress and I hide in that fortress. God will never leave me." When the veil of ignorance parts, life eternal is revealed to us. The wisdom that then comes is said to be so light that a child can carry it away in its hands and yet so weighty that a sage needs all his life to gather it up. We must understand that we ourselves, as human individuals, are nothing, that the true Self of us is our aim and merging in the Absolute, realizing the Absolute in us, is our only goal. Only then does the fog dissolve, revealing behind its veil the eternal goal that we can reach in silence, humility and desirelessness. As Goldsmith says: "When we have rested, when we have become still, and when we have permitted the Spirit to permeate mind and body, a Something greater than ourselves goes before us and prepares the way for us. In complete silence, with no attempt to use

God, use Truth, or use a power over anybody or for anybody, something takes place within us that dissolves the problems of life and makes the way one of joy and fulfilment. In that Silence we find Allness. In that quietness and confidence we find our strength and peace." (from "The Thunder of Silence.").

In that Silence man discovers his Oneness with the Absolute. Then he is liberated from the bonds of the ego, he is 'Jivan-mukti', liberated already in this life, standing on the summit. Then we no longer try to remove our problems with our own power. We no longer have any problems to remove. "We rest in His word. We rest from all power and God works the miracle."

This was the mission of Joel Goldsmith, to show us the spiritual path that he himself had followed in his life, as he wrote to the present writer a year before his passing away in June 1964: "For that reason only I am on earth—to reveal God's harmony on earth, to show forth God's Glory, to reveal God's grace." He experienced Truth Eternal, having beheld the parting of the veil; so he could say: "Rumblings of the thunder of the deep Silence of My peace reverberate and increase in power until eventually they break every barrier. The mighty noise of the Silence grows in volume until its thunder rends asunder the veils of illusion and God stands revealed in all His majesty, glory and peace." (from 'The Thunder of Silence.')

THE INDWELLER

By A. RAO

There is no one here.
Life now is an empty boat
Governed by remote control,
The lunatic helmsman gone.
Waves rise up —
People and things to do —
He, the Invisible, steers.
There is no one else here.

STARTING THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

By JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

The question is not one of attaining at first that degree of illumination which would set one up as a spiritual teacher, but how to attain sufficient illumination or enlightenment to be able to free oneself from the discords and inharmonies of human living and build up within oneself a spiritual consciousness that would not only lift one above the world's troubles, family troubles, or community troubles — but enable one to live one's normal human, family, business or professional life and yet be inspired, fed, and supported by an inner experience or inner contact.

We know that all people of a religious turn of mind (and it makes no difference what their religion may be), attain some measure of inner harmony or inner peace and then find themselves in possession of an inner Grace that lives their lives for them. The reason it makes no difference what their religion may be is that there is only one God, one Spirit, and Spirit does not know the difference between a Jew or a Gentile, a Protestant or a Catholic, an Oriental or an Occidental, or an American Indian. As far as Consciousness is concerned, It is entirely without religious beliefs, convictions, ceremonies, rites, creeds, or forms of worship. It is an absolutely free and independent Spirit that permeates us, just as the life of nature permeates a blade of grass, or an orchid, or a daisy, or a violet. It does not know the difference and it does not make any difference to It whether it is a mongrel dog, or a full-blooded dog. The same Life and the same Spirit animates all.

We are told in Scripture that "He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,"¹ and that as far as God is concerned there is neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free. The Master made that very clear when he said, "Call no man your father upon the

earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."² If he were personalizing, if he meant that only for those who were listening to him, then God is only the Father of the Jews. There were no Christians in his day, nor was there a Christian church or a Christian sect — there were only Jews in the holy lands and he was one of them, a rabbi in their midst. Therefore, if we were to take him personally when he said, "Call no man your father upon the earth," we would have to say that the Jews are the only ones who have God as their Father. We know from his teaching that he was not speaking to anyone personally, he was voicing Truth. In other words he might have said that two times two are four while speaking of cabbages, yet not meaning to imply that the principle applies only to cabbages. Two times two are four whether applied to cabbages or kings. Therefore, when he says, "Call no man your father upon the earth" he is not addressing only you who are reading this, nor was he addressing only those who were sitting before him listening to him — he was talking out into the world, proclaiming a message that was given to him of God.

No person on the face of the globe can hope for spiritual enlightenment unless he can first of all recognize that there can only be one creative Principle and that Its location is neither in holy mountains, nor yet in the temples in Jerusalem. Its location is neither here, nor there, but within you — and it makes no difference who the "you" may be. It makes no difference if it is the you in a hospital, the you in prison, or the you in business, in art, or in a profession — the kingdom of God is within you and the kingdom of God is Spirit, not a superhuman

¹ Mathew, 5: 45.

² Ibid., 23: 9.

being. This step constitutes the very first step in attaining spiritual light. The presence of God is within *you*, whoever the *you* may be.

When you have taken that as a point of meditation and have come to the place where you actually feel the truth of it, where you actually feel the presence of God in the air, or in your body, in your business, in your home, in your competitor, or in the enemy across the sea or across the street — you come to the next step. This step everyone must take before enlightenment can come, which is the realization that — since the kingdom of God IS within you — It must be permitted to flow out from you. It cannot come to you and you must, at some stage in your unfoldment, let It flow forth through you. For instance, companionship is so simple to demonstrate because all it requires is that you be a companion. That is all! Once you become a companion, you have companionship. Once you find something or someone to companion with, and it does not have to be a human being at first, or a member of the opposite sex, or a stranger, you can begin to find companionship with members of your own family or with the birds that come to your lawn, or you can find companionship with the stars. The point is this, that companionship is an emotion, an experience, a sharing of one's self. It could be at the level of neighbourliness or friendliness, or it could be at the level of husband, wife, brother or sister. All companionship means is a sharing of one's self with someone else. Therefore, companionship is always available to you because it is within you; it is the gift of God within you and you are the one who determines whether you will keep it locked up or whether you will be a companion. The moment you decide to be a companion, you have companionship.

The kingdom of God is locked up within you, so there is no way for us to produce supply for anyone. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."³ Everyone on the face of the earth has all that the Father has, which is infinity, and to try to

get something out there in space is folly. Supply is not demonstrated in getting, but in opening out a way for the supply to flow out from its Source — which is the kingdom of God within you. Therefore, illumination can only come to those who realize: "The kingdom of God, Light, Truth, Wisdom and Love is within me. All that the Father hath is mine." Just as you have to find a way to express companionship, so do you have to find a way to express supply. You do it in many ways, as the Master has indicated in the Sermon on the Mount. Give, but be sure no one but God knows about your prayers. Pray for your enemies, and forgive. The Master gives all of it as an action that takes place from within you to the without, and at no time does he indicate that there is a getting of something. "That ye may be the children of your Father,"⁴ he says, "pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you,"⁵ and he tells you to "forgive seventy times seven."⁶

There is no way to gain love from the world or from the people of the world. Many have tried and all have failed, because it cannot be accomplished. The only way is the way of spiritual light. By loving you become loved, and there is no other way. Waiting first to be loved is like waiting for something to come from a blank space "out there." You must first put love out there before it can flow back. You must first cast the bread upon the water before the bread can come back to you. Only that which you put out there finds its way back here, because in and of itself that space has nothing to give you. However, in proportion as you put something out there into space, the very act makes way for it to find its way back to you — pressed down and running over.

Spiritual illumination begins with the realization of these simple truths, all of which are based on the premise that the kingdom of God is established within you and that, in order to enjoy it, you have to find a way

³ Luke, 15 : 31.

⁴ Mathew, 5 : 45.

⁵ Ibid., 5 : 44.

⁶ Ibid., 18 : 22.

to bring it out. As you meditate on these things and as you ponder them, you come to a place where there is nothing more to think about. You have said it all, you have thought it all, you have declared it or affirmed it, and you have come to a place where you become still. In the very moment you achieve stillness, you find something takes place within you, something of a "not human" nature. Something comes into your awareness which you yourself are not declaring, affirming or stating, but which you are hearing. You are receiving from the depths of your withinness, but you yourself have created the circumstance by means of which this the Truth, intellectually know the Truth. declared it, felt it, stated it, and then been still as if you had created a vacuum, and now up into that vacuum the voice Itself can announce Itself and bring with it illumination. The first step is to consciously know the Truth, intellectually know the Truth. Through this constant pondering, meditating, cogitating, you bring yourself to the place where you have said it all and thought it all and are still — then into that stillness and up from that stillness comes the very Light that you have been seeking.

It is necessary first to divest yourself of every belief that God is a respecter of persons, religions, churches, or races, and come to see clearly that God is Spirit, God is Life, God is Love — and that the presence of God is actually within you! "The (very) place whereon thou standest is holy ground,"⁷ because the presence of God is there. However, when you are declaring that about yourself, look up and notice the hundreds of people in your neighbourhood and remember: "Whether or not they know this Truth, I know it is the Truth about them." If you are not praying for your enemy, if you are not knowing the Truth as being a universal Truth, you are again trying to finitize It, or limit It, and God cannot be limited.

The next step is easier because of the two previous steps. You now come to the place where you recognize that man cannot influence God, man has no power over God's

world, and man has no jurisdiction over God. Man cannot have his own way with God; man cannot get God to do his will or his way. Therefore, the next need is the ability to be a beholder. Since you cannot influence God, at least you can watch what God is doing. You can become a witness to what God is doing in your life, in his life, in her life, or in its life. When the sun comes up in the morning, it comes up for Jews and Gentiles, whites and blacks, Orientals and Occidentals. It has no favorites and, if you want to watch the sunrise, you must be willing to acknowledge that the sun is rising for everyone in the community.

There must always be the remembrance that what God is doing God is doing, that He does not need your help, nor can He be controlled by you. God's grace cannot be stopped. Even if you think you are in disobedience to His law, God's grace is still flowing. You may not receive the benefit of it, but only because you have cut yourself off from it.

It is very much like the subject we have of karmic law: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."⁸ God has nothing to do with your sowing or with your reaping. It is as you sow. If you sow. If you sow to the flesh, you reap corruption. If you sow to the Spirit, you reap life everlasting. Therefore, it is always you. By your thoughts and actions of today you are determining your karma of tomorrow. By your sowing today, you are determining your reaping tomorrow. Therefore, if you have shut off health, safety, security or inner peace through an act of disobedience to one or more of the Ten Commandments, or through a violation of loving your neighbour as yourself — do not blame God. God neither gives you peace nor takes it from you; God neither gives you health nor takes it from you; God neither gives you supply nor takes it from you. God's grace is as free as the sunshine. You can pull down the shades and never see or feel the sun if you wish, but that is your action, not God's. As far as

⁷ Exodus, 3: 5.

⁸ Galatians, 6: 7.

God is concerned the sunshine is always there. God's grace is very much like the sun in the sky. It is there and it is available for everyone, even though temporarily there may be clouds hiding it.

Your recognition of this, your lack of trying to get God to do something, your ability to refrain from trying to entreat, beg, influence or bribe God — your very act of refraining brings the action of God into your experience. "God IS, not because of me but actually in spite of me, God IS. God is closer to me than breathing . . . the place whereon I stand is holy ground . . . where the presence of the Lord is, there is freedom and fulfilment!" In the moment when you learn to refrain from taking heaven by storm, in the moment when you are able to sit back in the realization, "Where I am, God is," and be still, you have opened out the way in your own consciousness for the Omnipresence which was already there to make Itself manifest and evident in your experience.

The error is the attempt to influence God: "God, go out there and destroy my enemies' possessions." The attempt to personalize God or to get God to do something for someone is due to the inability to understand that God is Spirit. That very statement is in itself a freeing and a healing one. There is nothing you can do about moving Consciousness, or influencing It, or bribing It. There is nothing you can do but LET It envelop you, LET It pick you up, LET It dominate you, LET Its will be done in you, and then you find that you have made yourself a transparency through which the Light can shine.

This Light is already present within you, not a Light you gain from books or worship or teachers, but a Light that books or worship or teachers can reveal to you as having existence within you. The teacher's function is to unveil the Light that already constitutes your innermost Being, your innermost Self, your innermost Identity. The function of the teacher and the teaching is to unveil the presence of the Spirit of God that

is within you, so you can eventually say, "Thank you, Father. I and my Father are one."

The function of this Presence that is within you is to heal the sick, raise the dead, preach the gospel, feed the hungry, forgive the sinner. It never has left you and It never will leave you. You could change your religion seven times, but that Presence would still be with you. You could live in a location where a church had never been heard of, and that Presence would still be with you. It will *never* leave you nor forsake you. It is always there, but your coming into the benefits of It is dependent only on your contemplation of this Truth, and you then gradually find you receive confirmation from within yourself that is true. You receive an assurance from within. Actually the Voice speaks to you, although whether It speaks audibly is of no importance as long as you feel an inner assurance in one way or another that you are living by Grace. Not by might, not by power, not by force, but by Grace, by a divine Grace that operates just as freely as the incoming and outgoing tides or the rising and the setting of the sun — and just as painlessly. It is not a matter of earning or deserving God's Grace. As humans we cannot earn or deserve the Grace of God, and that is why we are told that we must "die daily" and be reborn of the Spirit. As humans we are not going to earn or deserve God's Grace, but as children of God we are heirs to it and all we have to do is recognize our sonship.

As you contemplate these basic Truths, as you learn to come into a state of mind, a state of consciousness that always has the assurance that there is an inner Presence, an inner Power, an inner Grace — and relax in It — you find that It does your thinking for you. It does your directing; It does your enlightening; It will go before you to make the crooked places straight; It is a healing influence in mind and body; It is a supplying Presence — and It does this with no help from you. All that is necessary is your ability to relax in It.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside the still waters."⁹ . . . He performeth the thing that is appointed for me."¹⁰ . . . He will perfect that which concerneth me."¹¹ It is always He, but He cannot do it if you take the reins and run away, if you take thought for "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed." You are then not leaving room for Him ; it is all "me", the me that should be dying daily in order that I can be reborn. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."¹² How can you be quiet and how can you have confidence unless you have the awareness of an inner Grace ?

This Path constitutes a way of life. It is a religious way of life, except that if such a term is used, it would seem to denote a religion and it is not that kind of a life. It is a religious life in the sense of a knowledge of God Life, but to avoid giving the impression that we have found some particular religion through which God is blessing us — this should rightly be called the contemplative way of life because it can be lived by Jew or Greek, Protestant or Catholic, Oriental or Occidental. It can be lived by anyone. It is a contemplative way of life which recognizes that God is Spirit, that Spirit is Omnipresence, and that Spirit is within your own being. It is a contemplative way of life that is absolutely unrestricted. It is available to anyone of any faith or no faith, as long as one can recognize that God is Spirit.

This temple has God as its central theme, not your God or my God, just GOD—and a God that belongs to no one—a God that just is and has to be universal. That is why this particular order¹³ can flourish in every

country on the globe where there is freedom and where one is not compelled to worship in a specific way. Wherever there is freedom this order is to be found, because it does not give a name to God nor does it give a religion or a faith to God. It just recognizes God as the Principle of life, the Grand Architect of the whole universe.

It is for this reason that the contemplative way of life is the way of life for an individual who can recognize this great Truth, that wherever or however God is worshiped it is the same God because there cannot be more than one God. Whether as Hebrews we go into a temple with our hats on, or as Christians with our hats off, as Orientals with our shoes off, or as Christians with our shoes on, it must be understood that this can make no difference. What we are doing is worshipping in whatever way means dedication or sacredness to us.

The contemplative, then, is the individual who is paving the way for world peace, because he is recognizing that there is only one Father, one God, equally of all, and that we are therefore brothers and sisters. The only relationship that is essential is that we treat each other as members of one household. To do this is to love God supremely, but it is also to love your neighbour as yourself.

The next step in your Infinite Way unfoldment is going to be to learn the nature of the life of a contemplative, and the willingness to understand that a person can be a contemplative and yet follow any religion or no religion, because it is all based on God as Omnipresence. Therefore, there can be only one Presence and that Presence must be the only Power. Call It by any name you will, worship in whatever form you will, fast if you like or feast if you like, as long as you are doing so from an inner feeling of sacredness.

⁹ Psalm, 23: 2.

¹⁰ Job, 23: 14.

¹¹ Psalm, 138: 8.

¹² Isaiah, 30: 15.

¹³ By 'this order' the author refers to the 'Infinite Way' groups which he directed. (Ed.)

I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE

By SAGITTARIUS

But who is this 'I'? Not the 'I' who is anxious what the morning post will bring, who likes one person and resents another, who plans for the future and broods over the past. I am not raising the question whether it is bad or wrong to do these things but only stating that the person who does them is not One with the Father. Every one admits this; that is why, putting it crudely, they say that they are not One with the Father but only Christ was. But that is putting it very crudely, treating it as a mere accident of birth, just as one person might be born the son of the king and others not, and there is nothing you can do about it. If that were so, would Christ have urged us to do something about it, to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect?

If the 'I' who is One with the Father is not John Robinson it is also not the individual Jesus of Nazareth, the man who trod the streets and gave sharp rejoinders to his critics. How could it be when the Father is eternal and immutable while John or Jesus is situated in history and subject to change and growth? How can the two be the same?

Then what is this 'I'? If you stop thinking but retain consciousness you become aware of a sense of being that is more essentially 'you' than your thinking mind or your body is. It is hard to describe but it can be experienced, perhaps after some practise. If it could not, describing it would not help much. One clue is that the individual consciousness of John or George is situated in the head, while this, so long as physically located, is in the region of the heart. I say "so long as physically located" because it may involve a state of trance; but it need not. It can be accompanied by full physical awareness. In that case it perceives the physical circumstance of life, its obligations as professional man, husband and father, its powers and liabilities, but all

impersonally, as though they concerned somebody else. The whole environment seems a reflection of itself, and at the same time seems to be contained in it. It sees the world as something éphéméral in it, not itself as something éphéméral in the world. It has a sense of changelessness, of reality, of eternity or timelessness, untouched by the world of forms.

And what is the Father that it is One with? The temptation might be to say 'God'; but to answer such a question with an undefined word is no answer. What is meant by 'God'? One can feel rather than understand that there is pure Being manifested in the entire cosmos but unaffected by it, manifested equally and simultaneously in each individual creature and in the whole universe. As good a definition as any is by a Christian woman to whom an experience of Realization came spontaneously: "it was all that is, and there was no God, and equally no Not-God."¹

Then how does this differ from the being that one feels in oneself? The whole point of Christ's saying is that they do not differ but are the same. And yet they must be the same differently or there would be no need for the saying. There is a feeling of universal Being within which the worlds and beings are no more than a shadow-show; there is the feeling of being in the heart; there is a feeling that this derives from that and yet is the same as it, that it is the Son of the Father and yet One with the Father. It is not John or Jesus or Horatio Gubbins but the One that manifests equally and simultaneously as all of them. One illustration might be that the water in a bottle is the same as the water in the ocean that it is taken from, but it is not quite adequate,

¹ *The Following Feet*, p. 21: By Ancilla Longmans.

since the water in the bottle can on occasion draw on the power of the Ocean.

It is sometimes queried how this pure being that is One with the Father can function as John Robinson or Horatio Gubbins. It obviously can because there have been examples of it. There was one in modern times in the person of Ramana Maharshi. And such rare exemplars have always been felt to be more human than the rest of us, not incompletely human. Visitors to the Maharshi did not feel that he was unnatural but that they were. They felt that he alone was fully and naturally human, because he alone was fully divine.

But can the 'I' who is One with the Father be trusted to look after my affairs? Will he bring off the business deal I am planning? Will he get the promotion I have been angling for? Will Sarah Jane consent to marry him? The answer to such questions is neither 'yes' nor 'no'; it is that the asker of them is that very ego who must abdicate in order that the true 'I' may appear. The fact that they can be asked is the obstacle to realization of one's true identity as One with the Father. If it is more important for a business deal to come off than for the Self to be realized, then the Self will not be realized. Whether, if the Self were realized, the business deal would also come off is another matter. The only way is to take the great leap into the dark, to say: Let the sense of being awoken and take control whether it is good for business or not, whether Sarah Jane will marry me or not. And once it awakens and takes control one sees that the questions were unnecessary because what is due to happen will happen, what is appropriate will happen, whether it is what the grasping, scheming ego would have wanted or not.

Then how does it work out in practice? The person in whom the sense of pure being awakens has a body-mind instrument at his disposal just as has the ego-person. He can walk and sit and stand; he can distinguish hot from cold, sweet from sour; therefore he can find one sensation pleasant and another unpleasant. But, and here is the great

difference: he accepts both alike impersonally. As a further result of this, it follows that he can react to situations in the way that he feels to be required. For instance, he can get up and open the door when somebody knocks — or not. He can dismiss a dishonest employee — or not. He will feel what is required and act accordingly. This implies that he can think; he can use his mental faculty just as he can his sense of taste or smell. He can say "this calculation is wrong" just as he can say "this apple is sour".

Then why do they say that Realization means the death of the mind? When they do it means the mind as helmsman, that is to say the ego. The thinking faculty will still exist, and in fact will become more efficient, being no longer distorted by sentiment or self-interest, just as an unrealized person thinks more efficiently in matters that do not concern him personally, where emotion and prejudice do not come in to cloud his judgement. Only when the Self is realized nothing will concern him personally; everything will be impersonal.

Then will life be worth living? Won't that take all the spice out of life? That is what the ego thinks; that is why it insists on a life of frustration punctuated by brief triumphs and pleasures but mortgaged to sickness and dwindling powers instead of the unclouded happiness the Sages speak about. The best answer would be: Try and see.

But if we do, what kind of actions can still be performed and what kind have to be given up? There is no such rule. It is not any kind of activity in itself that has to be given up but personal involvement in it, that is to say the idea that you are the performer of it. What remains is impersonal activity, what the Chinese call wei-wu-wei, act-no-act, inactive activity. A man may be outwardly Horatio Gubbins, inwardly Wei-Wu-Wei. When personal involvement is eliminated it will become apparent spontaneously what activity is harmonious and what inharmonious.

Another question that is sometimes asked is whether, on realization of the true 'I' who is One with the Father the fictitious individual 'I' or ego ceases to exist or still survives but in complete submission to the Father. Perhaps it is not very important which. Either is possible. The ego-sense may evaporate completely or may survive but subjugated or may occasionally rise up again but too weak to cause obstruction. In Ramakrishna a vestige of it must have remained because he said that he wanted to stay separate in order to serve and enjoy the Mother. In Christ also. It was only the historical, individual Jesus that could pray for the cup

of suffering to pass him by and then add : "Not my will be done but Thine." Insofar as he was the 'son of man', as he so often declared, this feeling would come to him ; but insofar as he was the Son of God and One with the Father there would be no 'my will' to surrender to 'Thy Will'. The last gasp of the ego-sense was the despairing cry upon the cross : "My Lord ! Why hast Thou forsaken me ?" This question of ego-survival is, however, as I said, of secondary importance. The great thing is the awakening of the true sense of being. Thereafter the effort to stabilize it and make it permanent. The rest will follow.

TIME TO CHANGE

Translated by PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN

From the Tamil of Muruganar for an introduction to whom see our issue of October, 1964.

Fond, foolish heart of mine, long have you known
That your sure strength is Ramana alone.
And yet, forgetting him, you have your own
Destruction sought so far. Give up now straight,
Now, though already late,
Give up at one sharp wrench and utterly,
The world and dwell on him unceasingly.

He forgets himself, he is no longer conscious of his selfhood ; he disappears and loses himself in God and becomes one spirit with Him, as a drop of water which is drowned in a great quantity of wine.

— SUSO.

* * * *

The minds of the wise are not without activity but through their knowledge of the vanity of earthly things they are without those feelings which bind.

— VASISHTHA.

THE CHIEF END

By W. Mc. K. AITKEN

According to the Christian denomination in which I was brought up,¹ "the chief end of man is to enjoy God." Not to praise God, not to serve Him, not even to realize That One, but simply to enjoy. The emphasis is wholly on experience: "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good."²

To accommodate the chief end means arranging our lives in order to allow the Spirit full play. In fact, of course, the Spirit arranges everything. All we can do—if we are foolishly sensible and submit to Grace—is enjoy.

The obstacle on the mountain path to enjoying God is sin, the creation of the ego, caused by the mental illusion that man, who in essence is a spiritual being, can find his highest good in the material. Since this is basically a mental obstruction several means can be used to clear it. We can have faith that God alone is, or we can be still and know this. Or we can have the obstacle cleared in the presence of a saint. One can see enjoyment of God quite clearly in the faces of saints of all religions. So it was that artists in an age of faith would depict a halo to indicate the vibrations set up by the indwelling Spirit of God.

The path of enjoyment, like any other inner way, requires continual effort to quell thoughts, the roots of the ego. But if we remember that it is at God's prompting we are making the effort even the difficulties on the way can become a source of enjoyment.

Whichever way we choose to remove our sin and ignorance we must first have an open heart, a fit home for holiness, for it is from this centre that God operates. "The king-

dom is within you." That is to say God saves only me, only here, only now, just as I am. "To-day if ye will hear His voice,"³

It is strange, then, to think that enjoyment of God, immortality, can only start with the death of this body, that is to say when I am not here to enjoy it! It is doubly strange to think that immortality 'starts'. Strangest of all, however, for him who would enjoy God, is to *think*! For our chief end is not to think but to enjoy. Saints enjoy and theologians think. And thanks be to God we are "called to be saints" not theologians.

God is enjoyed within the heart and this enjoyment connotes awareness, not pleasure. By thinking we cannot understand the bliss of the Spirit. It is within the heart, the home of the Spirit, that understanding of what is dawns. The mind is the home of the ego, the cause of man's Fall, and can only understand what seems to be—the material. The mind distorts and limits God, Truth, That which is, with names and labels; it divides, separates and excludes. The relationship of the mind to the heart is that of the moon to the sun. The mind can only exist by virtue of the heart. "It is He that hath made us, and not We ourselves."⁴

Only when thinking subsides can the Spirit shine forth and Oneness, enjoyment, be restored. Only then does the stone⁵ shine forth as the mountain of fire⁶ and is Krishna seen as the blue canopy of the universe. Only then is the veil of this body-temple rent asunder, the carpenter revealed as King, and Resurrection—the chief end—made real.

¹ The Church of Scotland.

² Psalm, 34.

³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵ Siva lingam.

⁶ Ramana-Arunachala.

LIGHT ON THE PATH

By I. S. VARGHESE

The technique of the spiritual path advocated by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is well known to be the path of self-enquiry, though Bhagavan often directed particular aspirants to other paths, mainly devotion. It may be helpful to seekers to know about the experience of one who has tried to follow the path of self-enquiry for some years.

Though I have always been vitally concerned with religion, the position I had come to in middle age was one of agnosticism. I had totally lost faith in the Christian dogma which had been taught me as a child. The nearly one hundred denominations of Christianity nauseated me. All external forms of religion I held in utter contempt as the domain of old women and fools. It was at this time that I accidentally read Paul Brunton's 'A Search in Secret India'. This book produced a deep impression on me. I re-read it carefully, and some sections I read a large number of times, and found that I was on very shallow ground.

Being trained in the modern scientific method it had been my outlook that nothing is knowable beyond the things experienced by the senses. The very first fruit of self-enquiry, after the practice had proceeded for a few months was a total change of this attitude, and the conviction grew more and more that there is a realm of reality which I would call the realm of the Spirit. Though this conviction was very strong during the periods of meditation when the mind was quietened, during other times the mind tried to take revenge on this assault of its domain and tried to reassert its supremacy, especially by suggesting doubts about the validity of this conviction. To my scientifically trained mind this took the form of a persistent query "Cannot this conviction itself be an illusion?" Further meditation on the theme "To whom does this illusion appear?" reduced the frequency of this assault. I now

realise that this is a doubt that must last so long as the mind exists.

Another aspect of self-enquiry that became apparent after some months of practice was



the assurance of being taken care of by some Higher Power. There was a feeling of power all around, but always subtle power. In very complex situations totally unexpected solutions have automatically appeared. Some experiences which may be classed as mira-

culous have also come unbidden. It is not relevant to discuss these here. In short, I could personally testify to the findings of one of the earliest of Bhagavan's disciples, Mr. F. H. Humphreys —

"Though it takes years to find that 'That' (the Self), the result of this concentration will be seen in four or five months' time — in all sorts of unconscious clairvoyance, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round, yet always unconscious power."¹

Still a further fruit of self-enquiry was the total change of attitude to people and events. As Bhagavan told Paul Brunton "When you proceed with this enquiry your attitude to people and events will change." I was particularly wonder-struck at the disappearance of the hostility I had towards certain persons, whom I had counted as my enemies. I had never thought that this was possible or even desirable. But now I found that instead of my previous interpretation of the actions of these 'enemies' as deliberate and calculated to harm me, I began to realise that they were acting according to their lights and their nature, and no other course of action was possible for them. With this disappearance of hostility a thing I had not at all bargained for happened. I found that my 'enemies' were now becoming less hostile to me. Actually, after a period, the chief of them got quite reconciled to me, and went out of his way to help me on a number of occasions. It confirmed the findings of many spiritual masters that the only thing that has to be attended to and changed is oneself, and all else will follow. For me, it also confirmed the aphorism in the Yoga Sutras "When non-violence is fully established, all beings discard their hostility in his (the aspirant's) presence."²

An aversion to the eating of non-vegetarian food began to manifest itself only after a period of some years. It was to all appearances sudden. I had developed a distaste for beef much earlier, but fish and eggs con-

tinued to be indispensable items. It was at this time that I read R. L. Stevenson's "Travels in the South Seas". The chapter on cannibalism and meat eating in general affected me powerfully. And I found that I could no longer relish non-vegetarian dishes. It was rather hard at first to enjoy a vegetarian meal. But by and by I felt quite at home among vegetarian dishes. I must here state that incidentally my general health improved, and some digestive complaints I used to have disappeared altogether.

One of the most salutary changes in my attitude to things in general has been a growing capacity to treat so many complex situations with equanimity and without being unduly perturbed by them. This I sense to be due to the growing inward certainty about the course of events not being under our control at all and the conviction that we are only infinitesimal functionaries carrying out the behest of the Supreme One. And I have found that many complex situations have resolved themselves without any interference on my part.

Another thing that has changed has been the clinging to personal possessions. The tyranny of the world diminishes in exact proportion to our indifference to its value to us. In the last resort, when one becomes like a 'fakir' (one who possesses nothing and desires nothing) one is free of the world and the world has no hold on one. All our apprehensions, fear, planning and scheming are based on our overvaluation of the worth of worldly things, and the result of our considering ephemeral things of permanent value. If a man grows to the stature of a 'fakir,' he is free of all fears and apprehensions, as the phenomenal world does not bind him. He is indeed free in the most comprehensive sense of the word, and moves as a feather carried on the wings of the wind. He is indeed the 'jeevanmukta' — the one who has attained freedom while yet in the body. We are all treading the Path to that Beatific State.

May the Grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi be with all who read this.

¹ *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., p. 103.

² *Yoga Sutras*, 2-35.

CLIMBING ARUNACHALA

By MADGUNI SHAMBHU BHAT

Having been inspired and exhilarated by walking round Arunachala Hill in pradakshina,¹ I felt that it was too sacred to tread under foot, especially the peak, where the Divine Presence is concentrated. So, giving up the idea of climbing to the top, I prayed reverently to the Lord and the Goddess and bowed down in complete surrender. I even began to wonder whether it was not because of the extreme sanctity of the hill that Bhagavan Sri Ramana advised devotees rather to make pradakshina of its base than to climb to the summit.

That was on Monday, 1 June, 1964. I was intending to leave by the 10.30 bus that morning, and then it struck me that it is not auspicious to leave a Siva Kshetra on a Monday, that day being peculiarly sacred to the Lord, so I stayed on.

At about 2.30 in the afternoon, as I was resting under the neem-tree beside the little room where the Maharshi attained Mahasamadhi, gazing at the stately peak, I began once again to think of climbing it. "Sacred it is," I thought, "but how can one pray to the Lord without approaching him? How could they light the annual beacon on the peak if they did not go there? And if others go up why should I not too? Does a child not climb on its mother's lap? Does a father not carry his child on his shoulder or even his head? Am I not a child of the Parents of the universe?" So I decided to go. Indeed, I felt invited to do so. With little preparation and no more hesitation I set off up the hill at about a quarter past three in the afternoon, carrying two mangoes in my hand.

The afternoon sun was hot and bright. The stony path up to Skandashram, the first lap of the way, was scorching beneath my bare feet. It took me about half an hour

to get there. Skandashram is very cool and shady in the afternoon, when all around is hot and barren. I placed one of my two mangoes in offering before the picture of Bhagavan there and drank my fill of the cool water from the spring. Then I set out. The attendant put me on to the narrow path just east of the cave, running up to the peak, but he objected that I ought to have started out in the morning and that a stout staff would have been useful. I could do nothing about that now, so I ignored his suggestions and went on my way. He called out to me to be careful not to miss the path either going up or coming down.

At 62 I am fairly hardy and well preserved, but it was not long before this climb began to exhaust me. The sun was still hot and I had to walk over rocks and stones, not on a smooth path. My throat became parched and I felt a craving for a little water, but there was nothing I could do about it. Every hundred feet or so I stopped to draw breath and to gaze up at the peak and down at the town below and the countryside spread out beyond it. When I had gone about two thirds of the way up I began to feel rather lonely; but stopping and looking around I was heartened to see a few goats grazing nearby. Then I heard voices. Two young goatherds, boy and girl, were sitting on a large rock, talking and laughing—perhaps at me. Coming up to them, I asked them where the Seven-Spring rocks were, but I could not understand what they said. They got up, called to their goats and ran down the hillside as nimbly as their charge.

The sun was losing its power now and a cool, refreshing breeze had sprung up. There were a few thorn or cactus bushes by the way and I was elated to see a couple of small pure white spider-lilies in full bloom smiling up at me. I was tempted to pick

¹ As described in his article on pp. 85-86 of our previous issue.—Editor.

them, but they looked so secure there that I did not. I felt that they were a good omen for my approach to the sanctuary above. A little further on I was delighted to see many more of them nodding and smiling happily at me. I picked just one of them, although I felt some compunction at thus disturbing Mother Nature in her splendid worship of her Lord.

I had now reached the shoulder of the hill where it was level walking for about a hundred yards. The path had wound round to the east, so that I was in the shadow of the peak. It was pleasantly cool and it was a real pleasure to see the country below on both sides of the hill. My breath was coming in gasps and all the time to the constant chanting of OM. I looked around in humble prayer to have a sight of the mysterious Arunachala Siddha. Bhagavan Sri Ramana had seen him as a young man, but what a world of difference between him and a frail mortal like me!

The path now swung round to the north, so that the peak stood up to the south of me. Its steepness seemed ominous. The path narrowed and was badly cut up by water-courses, dry now of course. Every step was an effort and at each few steps I had to stop and gasp for breath. Each time I looked the peak seemed farther away and higher. Then I climbed another small shoulder of the hill; the path twisted again and I was facing north. At last the peak had come. I do not know how I climbed the last fifty or sixty steps. It seemed that I was lifted up by a helping hand.

So I reached the peak of Arunachala and was standing on the oval flat stone summit about fifty feet long by twenty wide. I gazed in silent devotion at the vast sky above with the bright sun sinking in the west and then surveyed the earth stretching out on all sides below. I bowed down to the Almighty. Well could man give up the ego and reject worldly life in such a spot. I noticed that the rock on which I was standing was dark and burnt from the oil and fire of the annual beacon. Then my heart leapt at the sight of a little pool of clear water in a small

depression of the rock. My throat was parched dry and Lord Arunachala had graciously provided me with that water. I sat down before it, facing north, prayed, and then drank the water in my cupped hands. The single remaining mango and the one lily I had picked and carried reverently to the summit were humbly offered to the Lord, remembering Sri Shankara's words: "A single bilva fruit offered to Siva in full devotion is enough to carry a man to Bliss and Salvation." I sat there in meditation for awhile, feeling the presence of the traditional figure of Lord Siva standing behind me. Then I rose and walked the full length and breadth of the oval. I found some more water in a rock pocket under a boulder and drank my fill.

The temples of Adiannamalai and Tiruvannamalai were both visible now from where I stood. I was standing on the axis joining them, facing the setting sun, the right or northern arm somewhat longer than the left.

It could not have been 6 o'clock yet when I started the descent. It was dusk by the time I reached the spot where the goats had been grazing, and I could see the town below all lit up. Thinking of the Lord and praying as I went, I slowly descended. By the time I reached Tiruvannamalai Temple (from the northern gopuram of which the path starts) it was about half past eight already. After having darshan of the temple Deity and having a light supper in town, I got back to the Ashram by 9.40, and went straight to bed, feeling exhausted but happy and elated.

Next morning I was told at the Ashram that there was an imprint of the holy feet of the Lord in the centre of the oval flat rock on the top of the mountain, where I had found the small pool of water that I drank. I was told also that Bhagavan Sri Ramana, when a young man living at Skandashram, used to climb up to the peak and back daily, taking only about two hours. Blessed are those feet of the Lord and twice blessed those who worship them! May this be acceptable to Him!

THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

By DR. K. M. P. MOHAMED CASSIM

We are all searching for happiness. The question is whether it can at all be attained by the mind. The mind is apt to mistake mere pleasurable sensations for happiness. And yet we find from experience that although gratified desire produces such sensations they only intensify the desire for further similar sensations.

The best way is for the mind to observe its reactions silently, as this enables it to erase the pollution caused by past impressions on it. It should be alert in watching its thought processes and the impressions made on it by people, ideas and things. Left to itself, it reacts by attraction or repulsion in contacting objects owing to its memory of past associations. This automatic process destroys its vigour and capacity for dispassionate observation. Self-observation is, therefore, the way to free it from subjection to past impressions.

When we watch the mind we find that it is filled with discontent and insufficiency. Its guiding motive is to get some sort of pleasure by dwelling on its past sensations, but such indulgence only weakens its power of concentration. Instead of depending on such sensations it should learn to observe its internal confusion calmly, as that will enable it to transcend the conditioning influence of past impressions. But it makes every possible attempt to deviate from such self-observation and thus evade perceiving Reality. It does not face the fact of its confusion but tries to escape the suffering caused by it by projecting fictitious distractions.

What is needed is just to be aware of the state of confusion without identifying one-

self with personal reactions or introducing one's emotional coloration. This sets us free from it and enables us to watch everything aloofly without acting on mere impulses. Thus in watching mental conflicts we find that the emotional attachment is dissolved. This capacity to observe aloofly but with full attention the problem that occupies our mind is the only solution to psychological complexes. Only by constant observation of our mind can we understand the various layers of our mental make-up.

Why is our mind so distracted? Obviously owing to the sensations that the physical world provides. It is excited by the pleasure that it derives from its relationship with the physical world. It is attracted towards the resultant sensations because it seeks mechanically the habitual excitements they cause, even though these ultimately produce dissatisfaction. To contact Reality the mind must be still, and only by stilling it can real happiness be attained.

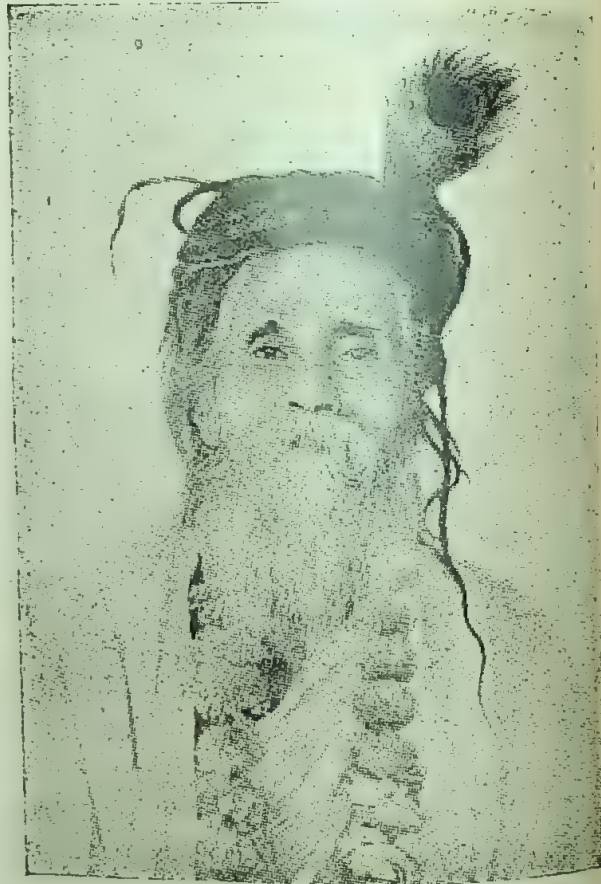
Happiness is really a pure and natural state in which the mind is silent. When the mind is calm and still there is the blessing of true happiness, the beauty of divine radiation. Happiness is not the creation of the mind; it is something higher which elevates the mind to the spiritual plane. Misery and worries are products of mental reactions; therefore, since it is the mind itself which produces confusion and misery, it cannot produce their absence, which is peace and happiness. It cannot grasp happiness because happiness is not a sensation to be grasped. Only when the mind is completely calm, happiness comes naturally, spontaneously and sweetly; and this is our true state.

THAKUR SRI SRI SITARAMDAS OMKARNATH MAHARAJ

By PROF. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE

Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath in his various moods of divine communion and ministration presents a picture of infinite diversity to the reverent observer of the inner workings of his mind. Tranquil, absorbed in inner prayer and meditation with eyes now piercing into the great mystery, now mellow with the calm, ineffable joy of realisation, now poring over letters and focussed on intellectual pursuits, and again radiating a serene tenderness of assurance, the picture reflects every phase of the human spirit in contact with Divinity. One can very well say that the beauty and tranquillity, born of habitual commerce with the highest visions that the human mind can conceive, have passed into that face.

It is an almost impossible task for one uninitiated into these radiant visions to interpret the facts of the Saint's life so as to relate them to his progress towards the ultimate goal, to reconstruct the inner history of his quest and realisation from the outer events of his apparently uneventful career. The shell offers but little clue to the steady but invisible ripening of the kernel within. While outwardly he was following the beaten track, the customary trail of an average Bengali householder's life with its grim struggle with poverty, its all-too-familiar gropings and experiments, its usual scholastic pursuits and dark, uncertain prospects, the inner light was burning with a steadily growing lustre and an increasingly luminous realisation of the supreme mystery of existence. Behind the apparent aimless driftings, the unadventurous conformity to the normal routine, God was slowly, but inevitably drawing His chosen vessel on to Him, touching his lips with the sacred fire and filling his heart with the quintessence of divine knowledge and inspiration. Sri Sitaramdas (then known as Prabodh



Chandra) lived like other men ; but hidden from all eyes, he was nestling closer in the bosom of the Eternal Mother. The bare facts of his life, we are afraid, will but little avail to reveal the essential core of his reality.

Yet such as they are they must be narrated ; it is only by the winding stairway of facts and events that we may reach the topmost tower of the soul's communion with its Maker, although we may not be privileged to enter the sanctuary.

He was born in his maternal uncle's home at Keota in the District of Hooghly on the 17th February, 1892. Thakur Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath was descended from a pious Brahmin family of Dumurdaha on the

bank of the sacred Ganges in the District of Hooghly in West Bengal. Even as a child of six, he received the beatific vision of Lord Siva, who revealed Himself to him through one of the windows of his dwelling house. The vision was renewed several years afterwards, in 1948, when he was a resident pupil studying Sanskrit at the Viswanath Chatuspathy, Chinsura. In this vision Siva appeared before him with his divine consort, Parvati and gave him his Ista Mantra, the holy symbolical letters through which the God of one's choice is meditated upon and attracted to oneself. The same year on the Dole Purnima day, he was blessed with the fulness of self-realisation, the attainment of the Ultimate Knowledge. This was followed by a mystic revelation in the presence of his Gurudeva, the latter's wife and his own wife which disclosed to them, in a blinding flash of illumination, a nameless, sealed truth about his real identity and mission in life. We are interdicted from the very attempt to express this Inexpressible Mystery and must perforce draw the veil on what must remain an incommunicable secret. A few dazed, tranced words of his own Guru, some incoherent sentences of emotional outpouring through which the stunned and reeling soul struggled to express its utter feeling of helpless surrender are the only record of this supreme moment. In the year 1936-37, he abjured his family name of Sri Probodh Chandra Chattopadhyaya, thereby cutting himself loose from his old domestic ties, and assumed, at the instance of his dedicated soul, his present designation of Sitaramdas Omkarnath.

Today, to all people in India, he is known as the indefatigable preacher of the Nama Mahamantra. He breathes and lives in the very atmosphere of this Name-chant, which folds him round as a finer garment of the soul and is, as it were, the subtler breath of his spiritual life. An indissoluble, ever-lasting partnership has sprung up between him and the Name; they have become almost interchangeable entities. He seems to have laid down, voluntarily abdicated, every vestige of that superhuman power, that wonder-working, miraculous potency which direct

vision of God confers upon the Saint who has grasped the last prize. He is now like a little child, wrapped up in the singing of the name, intoxicated with the nectar of the Divine melody, pouring forth his whole soul in congregational prayer and worship, at one with his common disciples and the God-seeking multitude. To propagate the Name, to bring home to all and sundry its incalculable and unmeasured power, to extol it as the easiest method of salvation, to found centres where the chant goes on without a break for an indefinite and undetermined future has become the principal mission of his life.

This mystic chant Hare Krishna, etc. was revealed to him in his long trances as the Supreme Truth. The very Omkar sound, the repository and symbol of eternal verity, has merged and dissolved itself into this simple couplet, to be heard from the lips of almost every devout person, sung on every conceivable occasion by strolling mendicants and monks and householders, certainly the most familiar and oft-repeated song in the rural life of India. This truth came home to him not merely in the wake of his profound inner conviction, but was further reinforced by a direct divine mandate, emanating from Sri Sri Jagannath Deva of Puri-dham before whom he had prostrated himself in agonised entreaty and prayer to receive the light. It was in April 1937, shortly after the beginning of the Bengali New Year, that this command was vouchsafed to him and ever since that date he has dedicated his life to carrying out this command. When his disciples speak of him as an Incarnation of God, he neither assents to nor openly disclaims this deification. He humorously compares himself to a lump of dull, grey iron which has been made to shine with a red-hot glow because of its being steeped in a fire-bath. If he is a God, he is not so in his own right but because the fiery touch of the Name has adhered to him and transformed his human stuff. The credit therefore, if any, is not to him, but to the name :

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare.

To immerse oneself in this sublime chant is to feel round one's body the loving embrace of Sri Sitaram and his heart-throb beating against our own!

Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath has twenty-six ashrams throughout the whole of India. He visits one or another of them from time to time but has no fixed place of residence. He travels about the country in response to invitations from devotees and disciples, and wherever he goes he propagates the invocation of the Holy Name. His stay in one place is often quite brief. He is

perpetually on the move, accompanied by a mobile caravan of chanters of the Name. The best way of discovering his whereabouts in order to contact him at any given time is perhaps to write to the Manager of 'The Mother', a monthly journal that he sponsors, at P-19, Belliaghata Main Road, Calcutta-10. Many do seek to contact him because, although he speaks only Hindi, apart from his native Bengali, he has many Western followers also, both European and American. There are Indian Muslims also among his disciples.

THE SADHU'S PRAYER

By EBBANA GRACE BLANCHARD

Awake among sleepers,
Mindful among the thoughtless,
Silent amid noise,
Still in mobility,
At Peace between tensions,
May I lie always at Thy Feet,
In calm devotion.

Sell this present world of yours for the next world and you will gain both in entirety, but do not sell the next world for this one or you will lose the two together.

—HASAN AL BASRI.

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The lover of the world is like a man drinking sea-water : the more he drinks the more thirsty he gets, till at last he perishes with his thirst still unquenched.

—AL-GHAZZALI.

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The knower and the known are one. Simple people imagine they should see God as if He stood there and they here. God and I, we are one in knowledge.

—ECKHART.



The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by PROF. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

CHAPTER TWO

1

Said Sanjaya :

Despondent, overwhelmed with compassion (as he sat), his troubled eyes filled with tears, Krishna the Slayer of Madhu spoke to him :

2

Sri Bhagavan said :

Wherefore has this affliction in the hour of crisis fallen on you, Arjuna ? It becomes not the noble soul, leads not to heaven, but brings disgrace.

The appellation used here for Krishna is 'Sri Bhagavan' meaning 'Lord God', the same that was commonly used in addressing the Maharshi.

3

Yield not to unmanliness, Son of Pritha ; it beseems you not. Cast off this base faint-heartedness ; arise O Scourge of the hostile.

4

Said Arjuna :

O Slayer of Madhu, how shall I loose my arrows in battle against Bhishma and Drona, both worthy of honour ; how, Destroyer of the foe ?

5

Better it were to live in the world a beggar than to slay these honoured teachers. Were I to slay my teachers, even though

they seek their profit, the pleasures I enjoyed in the world would be stained with blood.

6

Nor do we know which is better for us, that we should conquer them or they us, these sons of Dhritarashtra arrayed against us, slaying whom we should not care to live.

7

Overwhelmed with compassion and bewildered as to dharma, I appeal to you to tell me clearly which is better. I am your disciple ; teach me ; I seek refuge in you.

8

I see no way to dispel this grief that shrivels my senses even though I should attain wealth and unrivalled earthly power or lordship over the gods.

9

Sanjaya said :

Arjuna of the Crested Locks, the terror of his foes, spoke thus to Krishna of the Flowing Locks, to Krishna Lord of Herds. "I will not fight," he said, and fell silent.

10

(As he sat) despondent between the two hosts, O Bharata, Krishna of the Flowing Locks spoke thus, smiling as it were :

11

Sri Bhagavan said :

Although you speak of wisdom you grieve for those who need no grief. The wise grieve neither for the dead nor the living.

12

Never was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these lords of men, nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be.

13

As the Embodied passes through childhood, youth and old age in this body, so does it take on a new body ; the wise man is not confused by this.

At the beginning of this chapter Krishna simply exhorts Arjuna to be manly, as any comrade might, but in verse 7 Arjuna appeals to him for instruction, seeking refuge in him as his disciple. So now, beginning from verse 11, Krishna, speaking as a Guru, raises the discussion to a completely different plane, striking at the ignorance that is at the root of Arjuna's grief, that is the illusion of separate individual being. Verse 12 might seem contrary to this teaching since it affirms the permanence of Arjuna and his foes, but what it really implies is: "You are the eternal ever-existent Self, though not necessarily in the Arjuna-body; so also with each of these."

14

The sense-contacts it is, Son of Kunti, that cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain. They come and go and are impermanent. Bear with them, O Bharata.

15

The wise man whom these perturb not, O Chief of Men, who remains the same in pleasure and pain, he it is who fits himself for eternal life.

Again an apparent contradiction. If the Self endures eternally behind every series of incarnations, how does the wise man differ in this from others? The answer is that, by identifying himself with the Eternal Self and not the transient form it assumes, he experiences this eternity.

16

The unreal has no being, the Real no not-being. These two facts the Truth-seers perceive.

In this verse the present exposition culminates. It is the essence of metaphysics, the heart of doctrine. It is all the theory that one needs to know. Not that the illusory individual being will come to an end at death or Realization or that the true Self will be attained, but that now and eternally only the true Self is, while the apparent individual self is unreal, non-existent.

17

Know That which pervades all this to be indestructible. That immutable none can destroy.

18

It is these bodies of the eternal, indestructible, incomprehensible Embodied that are said to come to an end.

19

He who considers That to slay and he who considers It to be slain are alike in error. It slays not, nor is It slain.

20

That is not born, nor does It ever die ; nor, having been, does It ever cease to be. That unborn, eternal, abiding, primeval Being is not slain when the body is slain.

21

Knowing It to be indestructible, eternal, beginningless, immutable, whom can a man slay or cause to be slain, O Son of Pritha ?

22

Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the Embodied cast off worn-out bodies and take on new.

23

Weapons cleave Him not, fire burns Him not, waters drench Him not, wind dries Him not.

24

Invulnerable He is, not to be burnt, not to be drenched or dried. He is eternal, all-pervading, changeless, motionless, enduring.

25

He is said to be unmanifest, beyond thought, immutable. Knowing Him to be so you should not grieve.

26

Even if you consider That evermore coming to birth and evermore dying, still should you not grieve, O Mighty-Armed :

27

For to him who is born death is indeed certain, and to him who dies birth is certain. Therefore should you not grieve for the inevitable.

28

Beings are unmanifest in their beginning, manifest in mid-course, and unmanifest again

in their end, O Bharata. What is there in this for lamentation ?

29

One looks upon Him as a wonder ; another speaks of Him as a wonder ; another hears of Him as a wonder ; but though hearing of Him none know Him.

30

The Embodied in every body is eternal, O Bharata. Therefore should you not grieve for any creature.

31

Furthermore, In view of your own dharma you should not falter ; there is no greater good for a Kshatriya than a battle enjoined by dharma.

The Kshatriyas are the warrior caste whose dharma is the upholding of righteousness and justice in the world. Krishna and Arjuna were both Kshatriyas.

From here to verse 38 Krishna resumes his exhortation to fight, but with the difference that Arjuna's illusion of the mortality of man has now been exposed, so that the objections to fighting need no longer appear so terrible.

32

Happy the Kshatriya, O Son of Pritha, to whom such a battle comes unsought, an open doorway to heaven.

33

But if you evade this righteous battle then will you betray your dharma and glory, and incur sin.

34

Moreover men will relate your lasting dishonour, and for one who has stood in honour dishonour is worse than death.

35

The great warriors in their chariots will think you left the battle from fear and you will be despised by those who thought well of you.

36

Many abusive words will your enemies speak, belittling your manhood. What could be more grievous than that?

37

(But if you fight) slain you will attain heaven or victorious you will enjoy the earth. Rise, therefore, Son of Kunti, resolved on battle.

38

Regarding pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, with an equal eye, prepare for battle. Thus will you incur no sin.

39

This that has been told to you is the wisdom of Sankhya, O Son of Pritha. Hear now the wisdom of Yoga, which, if you grasp it, will free you from the bondage of action.

Sankhya and Yoga are two of the six Hindu orthodox darshanas, that is schools or viewpoints. However, the terms are not used here in quite this sense. 'Sankhya' is used rather to denote 'right understanding' and 'Yoga' 'right action'. Arjuna is instructed first in doctrine so as to correct his viewpoint and enable him to understand life as it really is; then his attitude to life and activity has to be prescribed so as to enable his new-found wisdom to fructify in total regeneration.

One thing that the terms 'Sankhya' and 'Yoga' as used here have in common with their traditional usage is that neither of them is theistic. They are not atheistic, since they do not deny God; but they do not employ the concept of a Personal God, although the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali do recognize this in one verse as a possible approach; so also does this chapter of the Gita in one verse.

40

In this (path) no effort is wasted and no impediment prevails. Even a little of this dharma saves from great fear.

41

In this (path) the resolute are single-minded, O Joy of the Kurus, but the minds of the irresolute are divided and branch out endlessly.

42

The ignorant, being attached to the letter of the Vedas, declare in flowery language, O Son of Pritha, that there is nothing beyond.

43

Bound by desire, they make paradise their goal; they seek rebirth as the fruit of their actions, practising various rites for attaining pleasure and power.

44

Their thoughts being turned to pleasure and power and their minds captivated by words, they do not abide in meditation.

Krishna is not here denouncing the evil-minded, as he is, to do later, still less condemning the scriptures, but warning Arjuna against those formalists and ritualists (equivalent to the Pharisees of Christ's day) who are content to seek the proximate goal of a beatified individuality in a state of paradise.

The word 'Karma', which is translated as 'action' at the end of verse 39, has the three cognate implications of action, ritual and destiny. It is against karma marga understood as ritualistic activity that Krishna warns Arjuna here; later he enjoins karma marga in the sense of disinterested activity.

45

The Vedas treat of the three gunas, but be free of the gunas, Arjuna, free too of the polarities, free of acquisition and preservation, established in the transcendental state, possessed of the Self.

The gunas are the three trends or tendencies whose mutual stress holds the universe in being: sattva, the aspiring, upward, spiritual tendency of return to the Source, whose colour is white; rajas, the expansive, outward-going, active tendency, whose colour is red; tamas, the downward tendency, whose colour is black.

The opposites or polarities are the pairs such as good and evil, pleasure and pain, of which one implies the other. Arjuna is exhorted to abide in the Self, free from the gunas and above the polarities.

Yoga (etymologically 'union') is here translated, according to its context, to mean acquisition.

46

No more use than a well in flooded land are the Vedas for an enlightened Brahmin.

Another reminder not to be dependent on scriptures. When understanding floods in from all sides, the collection of its records in scriptures, like water in a well, is not needed.

As remarked in the note on v. 31, Arjuna was not a Brahmin; both he and Krishna were Kshatriyas. But the Gita later on defines the true Brahmin as the man who knows Brahman, whatever his parentage may be. That is obviously the meaning here.

47

Your concern is only with action, never with its fruit. Be not motivated by the fruits of actions; but do not cling either to inaction.

So far as regards the conduct of life, this verse, further developed by those that follow, can be regarded as the essence of the Gita. It prescribes the application to life of the doctrine enunciated earlier. A man should play his part in the cosmic dance of life, acting according to dharma, doing what is right because it is right, not motivated by desire or fear or by his own profit, but also not shirking his role in life for inactivity. Applied to Arjuna it meant that, as a Kshatriya, he must fight a righteous war because that was his dharma, accepting with an equal mind victory or defeat, death or dominion. He was not obliged to renounce victory or dominion if it came to him; only if that was his motive in fighting it would be wrong.

48

Steadfast in yoga and without attachment, do your duty O Wealth-Winner, indifferent alike to success and failure, For equanimity is called yoga.

In this verse karma implies 'allotted work' and is therefore translated 'duty'.

'Yoga' is used here to imply an attitude of mind. Sometimes, as in the following verses, it is used as equivalent to 'marga' to mean 'a path to Union'.

49

Mere action is far inferior to the yoga of understanding (buddhiyoga), O Wealth-

Winner. Seek refuge in understanding. Despicable are they whose motive is the fruit of their actions.

50

One who has mastered the yoga of understanding transcends good and evil even here. Therefore strive for yoga. Yoga is skill in action.

51

The wise who have mastered the yoga of understanding and renounced the fruit of activity are freed from the bond of rebirth and attain the state free from sorrow.

Here is the definite statement that right understanding combined with right action leads to Liberation.

52

When your mind has crossed the quagmire of delusion you will no longer care about what has been heard or what is to be heard.

This refers to the scriptures. Once delusion has been transcended instructions how to transcend it are no longer needed.

53

When your mind, bewildered now by the scriptures, stands firm and steadfast in concentration you will attain Yoga.

The word rendered as 'concentration' is samadhi.

Here, it will be seen, 'yoga' is used to mean not the path but the Goal. Indeed the path leads to and merges in the Goal. Similarly in China 'Tao' means both path and goal, and for Christians Christ is the Way and also the End.

54

Arjuna said:

What is a man like who is established in wisdom and steadfast in concentration, Krishna of the Flowing Locks? How does one of firm understanding speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

So common a desire this, in seekers—to model oneself on externals!

55

Sri Bhagavan said:

When a man casts out all desires of the mind, O Son of Pritha, and is content in himself he is said to be steadfast in wisdom.

56

He who is undismayed in grief and controlled amid pleasures, from whom lust, fear and anger have passed away, he it is who is called a Sage of steadfast wisdom.

The word translated 'Sage' is Muni, meaning 'silent', a word still used with that implication.

57

He who is free from attachment, who accepts good and evil alike without exultation or loathing, his mind it is that is established in wisdom.

58

He who withdraws his senses from sense-objects as a tortoise draws in its limbs, he it is who is established in wisdom.

59

Sense objects withdraw from him who abstains from them, but their attraction remains. On seeing the Supreme even this goes.

That is to say that abstinence as a discipline, although wise, is not enough. So long as desire has to be resisted it is not complete. Only when the Supreme State is seen desire itself passes away.

The word translated 'Supreme' is 'Para', more often found in a compound, as for instance 'Paramatma' or 'Parabrahman'.

60

Even though a man strives and is wise, O Son of Kunti, the impetuous senses forcibly distract his mind.

61

Restraining them all, let him remain steadfast, concentrated on Me, for he whose senses are under control is established in wisdom.

This is the only verse in the present book implying worship. The devotee will understand the 'Me' as Krishna, the follower of Sankhya or Yoga as the inner Self.

62

When the mind dwells on sense-objects attachment to them arises. From attachment springs desire, from desire anger.

63

From anger springs delusion, from delusion forgetfulness, from forgetfulness weakness of mind; and from weakness of mind a man perishes.

64

But he who moves among sense-objects with his mind and senses controlled, free from desire and aversion, attains serenity.

65

In serenity comes the cessation of all grief, for the mind of such a one is soon stabilised.

66

The uncontrolled have no wisdom and the uncontrolled have no concentration. Without concentration there is no peace; and what happiness can there be without peace?

67

When the mind follows the wandering senses it carries away the understanding, as winds do a ship upon the waters.

68

Therefore, O Mighty-Armed, he whose senses are withdrawn from sense objects is established in wisdom.

69

When it is night for all beings the self-controlled is awake; when all beings are awake it is night for the Sage who sees.

That is to say that manifestation of the universe is obscuration of Pure Consciousness, while the re-absorption of multiplicity is the unveiling of Pure Consciousness.

70

He attains peace whom all desires enter as waters do the ocean, leaving it undisturbed though ever being filled, not he who desires desire.

71

He attains peace who abandons all desires, acting without attachment, free from 'I' and 'mine'.

Correction; In the first sentence of the introduction in the previous issue 'Brahma Sutras' should be read instead of 'Vedic Hymns'.

72

This is the Divine State (Brahmishthiti), O Son of Pritha, which having attained a man is free from delusion. Abiding in it even at the end (of life) he attains Brahmanirvana.

This is the Second Chapter and is called Sankhya-Yoga.

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REVIEWS

✓ **RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS DISCIPLES:** By Christopher Isherwood. (Methuen, Pp. 348, Price 36s.)

To tell an oft-told tale about a life that was outwardly uneventful of a teacher who wrote no books is an assignment that many would shrink from. It is remarkable how well Mr. Isherwood has accomplished it. His account is aimed primarily at Western readers, and he shows great skill in weaving in the necessary amount of social background and Hindu doctrine for them without ever allowing it to become dull or heavy. It remains a vivid story of a rare ecstatic and his devoted band of followers. Moreover Mr. Isherwood writes quite simply as a devotee without the overtone of supercilious scepticism which used to mar earlier Western writings on such subjects.

Readers of deeper understanding, however, will not find the book altogether satisfactory. For one thing there is too much emphasis throughout on seeing God. How can one see the Formless? One can see a vision of some form assumed by God, but visions bring one no nearer to Realization.

Then there is the rather pointless attempt to prove Ramakrishna as an Avatar. In the strict scriptural sense of the word, there are only ten Avatars in this whole cycle or manvantara. The 8th was Krishna; the 9th, described merely as the 'Mleccha' or 'Foreign' Avatar, is variously identified with Buddha or Christ or both; the 10th is the Kalki Avatar who is to wind up this cycle and introduce the next and is yet to come. In this sense, therefore, Ramakrishna was certainly not an Avatar. But if the followers of a holy man like to use the term in a looser sense

who is to forbid them? From the viewpoint of Advaita what is to be realized is one's Identity with That which is manifested in the world with all its Buddhas, Prophets and Avatars, and the question is not very important.

In dealing with it Mr. Isherwood shows not very much acquaintance with either Hindu scriptures or other Swamis. He writes: "We have already seen two of the avatar's peculiar powers demonstrated by Ramakrishna himself. One is his ability to remain for long periods in the state of samadhi, which would quickly destroy the physical body of an ordinary human being. The other is his power of transmitting spiritual enlightenment to another person simply by touching him..." (p. 94). The second of these two powers is by no means rare; it was particularly prominent in Swami Nityananda, about whom there is an article in our last issue. The first looks like a sort of endurance test—up to so long a saint, above that an avatar. A queer idea. What is more serious is that it shows no understanding of the state of sahaja or 'natural' samadhi which, as in the case of Ramana Maharshi, can be permanent, not spasmodic, since it subsists with full outer awareness and requires no states of trance or ecstasy at all. Mr. Isherwood does refer to this possibility on another occasion when he says: "Ramakrishna had, throughout the rest of his life, the faculty of being simultaneously aware of God and the physical universe." (p. 124). But was this so? He continues to describe him falling into states of trance and ecstasy after this as before.

The cause of the confusion may be that Mr. Isherwood, as he himself tells us, writes from

hearsay with no direct knowledge of what he tries to describe. And what can a spectator know of the glories and hardships of the quest? He admits that: "The very object of sadhana—to obtain direct, unitive knowledge of God—can be, for most of us, only a hopeful phrase. It is not merely that we could never dare to attempt—we can scarcely even imagine—the supreme act of ego-surrender, surrender of all individual identity, through which God is known. And if we can dimly imagine it for a few moments at a time, it must appear to us as appalling as death itself; a leap into the utter void." (p. 99) What a frightful attitude of mind! How can one who holds it write about sadhana?

LONG PILGRIMAGE: The Life and Teaching of Sri Govindananda Bharati, known as the Shivapuri Baba. By J. G. Bennett. (Hodder & Stoughton, Pp. 191, Price 25s.)

Govindananda Bharati, who was to become known as the Shivapuri Baba, was 137 years old at the time of his death in 1963, Mr. Bennett tells us. He attained Realization in 1876 at the age of fifty after many years of complete solitude in a forest. He then travelled around India and later spent many years travelling over the whole world. Everywhere he was respectfully entertained by the most eminent persons, including the Shah of Persia, Queen Victoria, the President of the U.S.A. and Bernard Shaw. It is a pity that no documentation is offered of so extraordinary a claim. Surely some writers of memoirs or reminiscences must have noticed so remarkable a visitor. At least one of the claims made seems untenable: that is (p. 22) that he met the future Sri Aurobindo who was then a schoolboy in Baroda State. Actually Sri Aurobindo was a native not of Baroda but Bengal and went to school and university not in India but England. His connection with Baroda started only after his return to India at the age of 21 in 1893.

Be that as it may, what was the Realization that Sri Govindananda attained? We are told (p. 20) that it means seeing God; and indeed throughout the book he is urging people to make that their aim in life. But what does that mean? Has God a form to be seen? As long as there is seer and seen one is still in the realm of duality. What is seen can have no more reality than the seer of it.

And how is one to set about it? By thinking of God, the Swami constantly repeats. "Think of God alone. Put every other thought from your mind." (p. 110) But thought is the great barrier to God. One can think of the attributes of God—

beauty, majesty, goodness, etc.; but it is impossible to think of what is beyond thought. It would only mean putting a mental concept in the place of God. Even meditation is described as "profound thinking" (p. 110). Actually the meditation that can lead to Realization is suspension of thought while retaining consciousness and directing it gently but firmly towards pure being, pure, impersonal awareness. (This provision is inserted in order to safeguard against a modern technique which, by laying the mind open without proper direction may, as Christ put it, let in seven worse devils.)

One feature of the Swami's teaching which may be particularly appropriate for Western seekers is his insistence on a strict discipline of life and behaviour. Even here, however, his prescription of three separate disciplines of body, mind and soul seems to defeat the purpose by unnecessary complication and to by-pass the real need.

THEURGY, THE ART OF EFFECTIVE WORSHIP: By Mouni Sadhu. (Allen & Unwin, Pp. 263, Price 30s.)

In his latest book Mouni Sadhu turns back from his unfortunate attempts to expound Hinduism to Christianity, with which he seems far more familiar. By 'theurgy' he seems to mean Christian devotional worship, though on the rather low level of seeking boons in reward for one's worship (p. 15). On a more spiritual plane the worshipper turns to God for love alone with no thought of reward.

What vitiates the book is the author's obsession with powers and occultism and his constant self-advertisement as a master of these. There is no doubt that ritual can be effective, in Christianity as in any other religion, but only when it is prescribed by tradition and conducted by duly ordained persons. A hotch-potch of ritual from ecclesiastical and occult sources prescribed by a self-styled authority and conducted by unauthorised persons is something from which it would be well to abstain.

The writer who calls himself 'Mouni Sadhu' paid a brief visit to this Ashram and makes a point of referring to the Maharshi in his books and giving alleged quotations from him. Readers should be warned that these references and quotations are quite unreliable. For instance, in the present book he quotes the Maharshi (on page 143) as saying: "Realization is nothing but seeing God literally." Nothing could be farther from the truth. It so happens that the

article 'How I Come to the Maharshi' by H. W. L. Poonja in the present issue of *The Mountain Path* illustrates the Maharshi's disapproval of the dualistic desire to see God.

TUKARAM'S TEACHINGS: By S. R. Sharma. (Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7, pp. 80, Price Re. 1.)

Tukaram came at the end of a glorious series of Maratha poet-saints. He was neither Brahmin nor recluse but a low caste farmer and trader. Owing to his unworldliness he was chronically poor, and his wife was scold enough to let him know it. Finally, in 1650, he passed from life in a blaze of light, leaving no body behind.

Tukaram attained to the supreme experience of Identity, but by the path of love, service and devotion. He worshipped an idol but said: "The idol is installed within the mind, and the mind worships itself therein." He often combines the language of Identity with that of devotion: "I achieved the supreme experience: only the One remained in body, mind and speech. This was Bliss in all the three worlds. Tuka says: 'We have overcome this transitory existence by becoming slaves of God.'"

This little book gives an excellent account of the saint's life and teaching. It is well furnished with quotations whose radiant certitude is an inspiration to the reader.

IAMBlichus' LIFE OF PYTHAGORAS: Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. (John M. Watkins, pp. 252, Price 63s.)

The translator begins his introduction to this volume by declaring that: "When it is considered that Pythagoras was the father of philosophy, authentic memoirs of his life cannot fail to be uncommonly interesting to every lover of wisdom." Since the publishers have brought this reprint out in a limited edition of 500 copies (which perhaps accounts for its high price) they must be very pessimistic about the number of lovers of wisdom. Even though the words "father of philosophy" in the above quotation need to be qualified by the adjective 'Western', it is to be hoped that a larger reprint will soon be called for.

Of the great world teachers, Pythagoras has most affinity with Confucius. Like him, he taught wisdom indirectly, through the intermediate sciences such as music, ritual and mathematics, social behaviour and political skill; not the simplicity of the Tao. But whereas the whole of

China patterned itself on Confucius, the Greeks in general ignored Pythagoras.

He was already an Ancient in the times of his biographer Iamblichus. Nevertheless numerous records and traditions survived. The biography has a strong air of authenticity. It conforms also with the fragments from the writings of various Pythagoreans also contained in this book. Mr. Taylor's translation is extraordinarily felicitous, the 19th century idiom helping to recapture the tone of the original better than would that of to-day, without being archaic.

GITA REPRINTS

BHAGAVAD GITA, THE SONGS OF THE MASTER: Translated with an introduction and commentary by Charles Johnston. (John M. Watkins, pp. 132, Price 15s.)

THE GEETA, THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD SHRI KRISHNA: Put into English by Shri Purohit Swami. (Faber, pp. 95, Price 6s.)

There is a grandeur about Charles Johnston's translation of the Gita which does not for the most part detract from its scholarly accuracy. The publishers are indeed to be congratulated on having revived it. On the other hand, the introduction and comments betray an antiquated scholarship and fanciful outlook from which the reader might well have been shielded—for instance the Kshatriyas are called 'Rajputs' and are credited with higher and more ancient wisdom than the Brahmins; and the four basic castes are represented as branches of the white, red, yellow and black races all living in India side by side but as yet unmixed.

To some extent this lack of precise scholarship common to an earlier generation vitiates the text also, for instance in the use of the rather vague Western term 'soul' in Book 11, vv. 49 and following, where 'buddhiyoga' is translated as 'union in soul vision'. Prof. Radhakrishnan translates it more accurately as 'discipline of intelligence' and indicates that it may be understood to mean the yoking or union (yoga) of the intelligence with the Divine. Even the translation of the title as 'Songs of the Master' is less accurate than the usual 'Divine Song' or 'Song Celestial'.

Faber also have brought out a welcome reprint of a Gita translation, and in a paperback, which seems to indicate wide demand. It is in clear, bold English and makes good reading. It is on the whole remarkably accurate, though not scho-

larly since, in the first place, it is without introduction, notes or commentary, and in the second place it is not precise in the translation of philosophical terms. For instance, when in Chapter 11, v. 45, Arjuna is exhorted to rise above the pairs of opposites or polarities this is translated 'the pairs of opposing sensations'. Here again Prof. Radhakrishnan is more exact when he says 'be free from dualities', adding in brackets 'the pairs of opposites'. It means far more than sensations. But there is no doubt this is a good translation for the general reader.

GLIMPSES OF THE DIVINE MASTERS: By Ranbir Singh. (International Traders Corporation, New Delhi-5, Pp. 408, Price Rs. 16.50.)

It is with the ardour of a disciple not the probing of a historian that Ranbir Singh recounts stories and legends of the ten Sikh Gurus. There is much beauty and nobility in the stories. They are further beautified and enriched by translations from the poems of the Gurus. The author, commenting on their teaching, justifies the transition from the non-violent simplicity of Guru Nanak to the militant organization by which the later Khalsa defended itself from its persecutors.

The book ends with an account of the Sikh viewpoint and way of life. In this the author explains that it is a religion of devotion and practice, not of philosophy and speculation.

TRAINING THE MIND THROUGH YOGA: By M. V. Waterhouse. (Shanti Sadan, London, Pp. 166, Price 12s. 6d.)

The late Hari Prasad Shastri stood out among interpreters of Hinduism to the West for soundness and sobriety. He founded the 'Shanti Sadan' in London, in which his disciple, the late M. V. Waterhouse succeeded him as Warden, maintaining the same wise tradition. The present book is a compilation of fourteen lectures delivered at the Sadan, in which Mr. Waterhouse presents Yoga from various aspects as a system of mind and character training. Central to them is his teaching of the three stages of Adhyatma Yoga, that is *manana* or hearing of true teaching followed by *shravana* or cogitation upon it and then *nididhyasana* or meditation on it. He emphasises how much preparatory work can be done on these lines before contacting a Guru.

BLISS DIVINE: By Swami Sivananda. (The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, Pp. 520, Price Rs. 15.)

There have been few writers so prolific as the late Swami Sivananda. He was writing essays

up to the end of his life and the present edition is published posthumously, the essays being arranged in alphabetical order from Ahimsa to Yoga. They are both learned and orthodox, but the vigorous style in which they are written prevents them ever becoming academic.

ARTHUR OSEORNE.

STUDIES IN ADVAITA

ADVAITA VEDANTA: By M. K. Venkatarama Iyer. (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, Pp. 213. Price Rs. 18.)

ONTOLOGY OF ADVAITA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MAYA: By K. B. Ramakrishna Rao. (Research and Publications Department, Vijaya College, Mulki, Pp. 34, Price Rs. 5.)

The first of these two books is an excellent study of the fundamental principles of non-dualism as perfected by Shankara in his commentaries on the 'Triple Texts' and elsewhere. Prof. Iyer has also drawn on his knowledge of European philosophy to bring into relief the unique features of Advaita. The central concept of Shankara's Advaita is the Absolute. The non-dual nature of the Absolute, the unreality of the universe and the non-differentiation between the individual and Brahman are the triple features. Shankara demonstrates the intuitive truth of Advaita with the help of logic and scriptural support.

The complex question of the relation between Brahman and the Personal God or Ishvara is discussed with caution. Advaitic tradition does not seek to negate God but only to transcend the personal in spiritual experience. "When we view Absolute Reality under name and form it is described as 'God'. The Absolute does not suffer any change, for it is immutable and impartite."

The chapters on ethics and theology in Advaita make excellent reading. Within the range of 200 pages Prof. Iyer has touched on all relevant topics and answered critics of Advaita in India and abroad. One merit of his excellent manual is that it is based on the original works of Shankara.

To readers of *The Mountain Path* this book should be of special interest, since Bhagavan Ramana is in the tradition of Shankara and teaches Jnana marga as he did. Ramana Marga is Shankara Vedanta.

The small book that follows is a study of the nature and function of Maya in Advaita metaphysics. The author feels that in studying Advaita

men have missed the ontological aspect and failed to distinguish it from the epistemological. The traditional view is that Maya is a positive power that is beginningless but not eternal. It conceals the truth of Brahman by projecting in its place a world of appearances. But this is destroyed at the moment of Realization. Maya in this sense cannot be classified as real or unreal or as a combination of the real and the unreal or of a negation of them. The principle of Maya is used to explain world appearance, but Shankara did not develop it in all its details. Post-Shankara thinkers have worked out its implications more fully.

PROF. P. NAGARAJA RAO.

ESSAYS ON SAMKHYA AND OTHER SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: By Dr. Anima Sen Gupta. (Patna University Press, Pp. 170, Price Rs. 5.)

Dr. Sen Gupta is well known to students of Indian philosophy as an independent thinker who has specialised in the Samkhya system and has written two valuable works, one on the Chandogya Upanishad from the Samkhya point of view and the other on the evolution of Samkhya thought. The book under review contains a series of critical essays dealing with several problems of Indian philosophy.

In one of them, 'Philosophy Indian and Western', she brings out clearly how the two differ in their approach and also in their methods. Her conclusion that philosophy should succeed in making us spiritually pure and free will be endorsed whole-heartedly by every Indian. Her statement that a true realization of Indian culture presupposes an accurate analytico-synthetic knowledge of all important changes and developments that have occurred in the various spheres of Indian life through the ages is also sound. However her view that the philosophy of Buddhism tallies with that of the Upanishads seems open to question. Also one may query her statement that Buddha wanted to differentiate his teaching from what she calls the degenerate form of the traditional religion of the Hindus.

The Essays are critical and learned and the book is a distinct addition to the range of modern books expounding the problems of Indian philosophy.

There are a few spelling mistakes which more careful proof reading could have eliminated.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

YOGA CHUDAMANI UPANISHAD (with translation and notes): By Vishnuprasad V. Baxi, M.A. (Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar, Pp. 79, Price Rs. 3.)

Yoga Chudamani is an excellent compendium of the different processes that are normally grouped under the broad head of Kundalini Yoga and aim at liberating man from subjection to Prakriti into the freedom of the pure Spirit by arousing the latent energies in his system—by more or less mechanical means—and developing them to their fullest potential.

In 121 verses the text deals with the six Chakras, twelve *adharas*, three *Lakshyas*, five *vyomas*, the main nerve-conduits or *nadis*, the gradations of *pranayama*, the several *bandhas*—combinations of body postures and breath regulations etc. Sri Baxi who gives a straightforward translation of the text has added explanatory notes which are indeed very helpful for the background they provide to the intricate concepts in this science. He cites from several other authentic treatises and makes the subject interesting. His caution against attempting to practise these methods from a reading of books and emphasis on the necessity of a Guru in these matters are pertinent.

A very informative book presented with commendable restraint.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDUISM: By Satischandra Chatterjee. (Dasgupta, 543 College St., Calcutta, Pp. xii plus 179, Price Rs. 3.50.)

There are already a number of short but comprehensive manuals of Hinduism in the field. Whereas most of them indicate the principle scriptures and classify them, enumerating the various schools with their basic doctrines, Prof. Chatterjee begins with an account of the philosophical basis of all Hinduism and relates the rest of the matter to this philosophy. He tries to satisfy the critical Western reader and at the same time to "serve the needs of university students as well as of general readers interested in Hindu philosophy and religion" (pp. xi-xii). It has the merit of not being a mere factual guide-book to Hinduism but trying to provide a central point of view and interpretive temper. This temper is, however, obtrusively philosophical in an academic sense and not primarily spiritual.

PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM.

JOURNAL OF A SOUL: By Pope John XXIII
(Geoffrey Chapman, Price 42s.)

Pope John said of this Journal: 'My soul is in these pages', but those who seek to find here the secret of that power which enabled Pope John to open the Catholic Church to the rest of the world as had not been done for many centuries and to become one of the best 'loved figures' of the twentieth century, are likely to be disappointed. There is little evidence here of that breadth of vision and warmth of humanity which endeared him to so many people, or of that new understanding of the nature of the Church which has been awakened by the reforms which he set in motion. On the contrary, his piety is seen to have been moulded from the beginning according to the norms laid down by the Council of Trent, and there is scarcely anything to distinguish it from that of any devout priest or Seminarian of the past.

Yet there is perhaps a lesson here, that any form of traditional piety can always become the means for a profound spiritual transformation, if it is followed with total sincerity and self-abandonment. The basis of Pope John's spirituality was the two virtues of humility and charity and it is impossible to find anything more fundamental than this. For humility is essentially the total renunciation of the self and charity the total surrender to God, and in this all wisdom is to be found. To this one may add a constant search for 'recollection', for stillness and peace of mind and soul which enabled him to keep constantly in the presence of God.

But to these fundamental virtues Pope John brought something else, an immense simplicity, which is perhaps his dominant characteristic. It was the simplicity partly of a peasant and partly of a child and it became the simplicity of a saint, who sees everything in God. It was this that enabled him to break through the established routine of centuries and restore to the Church something of the simplicity of the Gospel, while opening his heart to men of every class and race and religion.

DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS.

THE SUFI MESSAGE AND THE SUFI MOVEMENT: By Hazrat-Inayat Khan. (Barrie & Rockliff, Pp. 47, Price 2s. 6d.)

Hazrat Inayat Khan made an immense impression on his followers in the West and even now, some forty years after his death, the organization and movement he founded are still flourishing.

His writings, lectures and sayings have recently been published in eleven volumes, and the present booklet by the same publisher gives the essence of their message together with a biographical introduction. Although himself the disciple and successor of a Chishti murshid, it was not orthodox Sufi teaching that Inayat Khan imparted or an orthodox spiritual training that he gave but some vaguer and more general message.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

OTHER BOOKS

THOUGHTS OF A SHAKTA: By M. P. Pandit.
(Ganesh & Co., Madras, Pp. 45, Price Rs. 2.)

Nilakantha Mahadeva Joshi, otherwise known as Yogishananda Natha, is an eminent exponent of Tantrism. During his visits to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Mr. Pandit has noted down many of his sayings and explanations. These are here reproduced. They display both technical expertise and wisdom.

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

We have received two more booklets from the Buddhist Publication Society of Kandy, Ceylon, unpriced as usual. They are 'The Wheel Publications' No. 76 and Nos. 77-78.

The former is an exposition of the profound significance of seeking. 'The Threefold Refuge' by the German bhikku Nyanaponika Thera. He shows how much more this implies than a mere profession of faith.

The latter, a double volume, is a centenary tribute to Dr. Paul Dahlke, the first to spread the Buddha Dhamma in Germany and to found a 'Buddhist House' there. A number of his essays here reproduced can still be read with interest and profit.

Both books are in English.

SRI LA SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL

An attractive booklet, apparently unpriced, entitled 'Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal, A Siddha Purusha of the South' is about a miracle working saint who is still living. It is published by the Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal Gyana Sat Sabha, 'Revatee', 1st Road, Chembur, Bombay 71.

TOWARDS THE SILVER PEAKS OF THE HIMALAYAS: By G. K. Pradhan. (Laxmi Syndicate at Lentine Chambers, Dalal St., Bombay 1, Pp. 213, Price Rs. 10.)

Mr. Pradhan has written in fictional form his conception of life lived in quest of Realization and in service of a Guru.

Gaudiya Math, P.O. Baghbazaar, Calcutta-3. Price Re. 1.

RAMBLES IN ADWAITA: By Sri Vimalananda Nrusimha Bharati Swami. Published by the author at Gudivada. Price not stated.

ITALIAN GITA

We have received an Italian translation of the Bhagavad Gita with introduction notes and commentary by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, published by 'Ubal dini Editore', Rome.

SUPER SPIRITUAL BOMB: An appeal to the Rational Faculty of the World. By Sri Bilas Bigraha Dasadhikari. To be had of Sri

CORRESPONDENCE NETWORK

In continuation of the list in our last issue:—

C. K. R. Nair,
Designs,
H. M. T. Ltd.,
Bangalore-31.

Archer Forsyth,
P.O. Box 428,
Mill Valley,
California,
U.S.A.

Francis Allen,
C/o. The Chartered Bank,
33. Bishopsgate,
London, E. C. 2,
England.



An ink drawing of Arunachala done in the Zen style by Irma de Valera, the Venezuelan artist mentioned in our last Ashram Bulletin.

Ashram Bulletin

ARADHANA

On April 29th was observed the 15th anniversary of Sri Maharshi's *videha kaivalya*, when he left the body. A large gathering of devotees assembled for the occasion.

The function started at 5 a.m. with the chanting of 'Arunachala Stuti' and 'Ramana Sat-Guru Stuti'. The puja proper commenced at 8 a.m. with the chanting of the Taitireya and Mahanarayana Upanishads and Sri Rudra Chamaka, Purushasukta, etc. Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa Abhishekam was performed. After Sahasranamam, the chanting of the thousand names of Bhagavan, the arati of flaming camphor was performed and the devotees felt very powerfully Bhagavan's gracious Presence.

The Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri Sayaji Sailam and his wife and Sri A. S. Kankeyan, Finance Minister of Pondicherry, were the chief guests.

The guests were all invited to lunch by the Ashram, apart from which there was feeding of the poor on a large scale.

In the afternoon there was a musical performance by Sri Kamudhi M. S. Ramadass (vocal), accompanied by Sri T. N. Ramamurthi on violin and Sri T. B. Subramaniam on mridangam. The performance was very much appreciated by the assembled audience, which included many Westerners.

Messages of good wishes were received from Sri C. R. Pattabhi Raman, Deputy Minister for Broadcasting and Information, Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister of Madras, Sri S. M. A. Majid, Minister for Local Administration, Madras, Smt. Rani Padmavati Devi, Minister for Local Government, Madhya Pradesh and Sri Karumuttu Thiagarajan.

Among the hundreds who thronged at the Ashram specially for the occasion, mention could be made of Sri H. C. Khanna and his family.



Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami and his family, Sri Thiagarajan of Ceylon, Sri K. Padmanabhan of Bangalore, Sri Framji Dorabji of the Wellington Talkies, Sri B. S. Ranganatham of Nellore, Prof. Viswanathan of Chidambaram, Sister Diana of Pondicherry and Miss Sarah Farrand of London.

After the evening poojas, at 8-30 p.m. Brahma Sri Jagadeesa Iyer and party conducted a thrilling Bhajan, which lasted till late in the night.

MADRAS

The Sri Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Alwarpet, Madras, celebrated Guru Puja on Sunday April 18th. After Veda Parayana, Shri V. H. Subramanya Sastri, of the Mylapore Sanskrit College, spoke

of Sri Ramana as Guru, Bhagavan and Ananda Murti and of his refreshingly modern and yet strictly Upanishadic teachings. Pandit B. C. Lingam read and explained a Tamil poem, on the miracles wrought by Bhagavan's eyes, specially composed by Sri Sadhu Om for the occasion. After the singing of songs from Muruganar, Manavasi Ramaswami Ayyar and Suddhananda Bharati and the distribution of prasadam, the function came to a close.

KOLHAPUR

The Dharma-Tatvajnana Mandal of Kolhapur celebrated the 15th Brahma Nirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan on 29th April. Sri Vasantarao Vagh and Pandit Khuperkarshastri spoke on Ramana Maharshi and his teaching, after which there was meditation followed by prayers, bhajan and arati. There was a beautiful spiritual atmosphere at the meeting.

KOPPAM

The 15th Mahasamadhi Day of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was celebrated at Vijnana Ramaneeya Mandiram, Koppam, Palghat, on April 29th. There was puja, archana and stotram in the morning. In the evening there was chanting of the Gita by Kumari P. Devaki Kutty, after which Prof. M. M. Menon spoke of the significance of Bhagavan's advent at a time when the world needs a universal teaching free from the clash of creeds. This was followed by nama-japa of Arunachala Siva which continued up to 8-47, the time when Bhagavan entered Maha-Nirvana. The function came to a close with arati and distribution of prasad.

CALICUT

The fifteenth anniversary of the Brahmanirvanam of Bhagavan Shri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated at Calicut on Thursday the 29th April at the Sri Sai Baba Mission Bhajan Mandir in the presence of a very large gathering of ladies and gentlemen. The proceedings commenced with a thrilling speech on the life and teachings of Bhagavan by Sri V. K. Kochunni Thampan, an eminent Sanskrit pundit of this place. This was followed by Guru puja by Sri Venkatarama Iyer, an ardent devotee who had the good fortune to sit at the lotus feet of Bhagavan and earn his grace by serving him. Dr. M. Anandan, an old devotee, brought the celebrations to a close by speaking about Bhagavan's greatness and distributing leaflets containing his essential teachings.



THE OBLATION: The 12th SRI VIDYA HAVAN (for a description of which see our July, '64 issue p. 185) was celebrated on the 26th March, '65, at the Ashram, amidst a large gathering of devotees.

PUBLICATION

Bhagavan often quoted or referred to 'Kai-valya Navanitam', 'The Essence of Emancipation', a Tamil classic advocating Self-enquiry. This work was translated into English by the late Swami Ramananda Saraswati, the compiler of the well loved record 'Talks with the Maharshi', about whom there is a note in our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964. Only now the Ashram has got round to publishing it.

MAHAPUJA

Mahapuja for the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan's mother was celebrated on 24th May this

year. Mahanyasa Rudrabhishekam was performed at the shrine of Matrubhuteswara in the morning and after the usual parayana and pujas prasadam was distributed to the devotees, who were invited to stay for lunch, and there was feeding of the poor.

ARUNACHALA

In connection with our article in the April issue on 'Arunachala as a Mandala', 'Kisor', a resident devotee, relates his experience in the matter as follows:

May-June 1964: Various mantras were tried during pradakshina, but only prayer to and talking to or about the Mother could fill my mind up to Adiannamalai, especially near the place where Uma is said to have made tapas. From Adiannamalai onwards there was mostly silence.

March 1965: The idea of Mother was the only thought that persisted along with the chanting of OM up to Adiannamalai. From there onwards even OM tended to fade out.

4th April 1965: Climbed the hill chanting OM and the names of Mother and Siva. Lost the way. Prayed to the Father-Mother combined and on opening my eyes saw the path clearly. Reached the peak. Chanted OM, Arunachala-Siva. Koham-Naham-Soham with feeling for awhile. Then this faded out to my surprise but there was joy in submission and Grace from the Guru. Only silence. Is that Ramana's "Just be!"? While returning there was only a faint chanting.

SRI H. C. KHANNA

One of those who came for the aradhana celebration at Tiruvannamalai was H. C. Khanna, who took advantage of his visit to hold the opening ceremony of the fine house he has built just outside the Ashram. It is built on Ashram ground on the understanding that when the owner and his family are not in residence the Ashram will be at liberty to use the ground floor as a guest-house.

RETURN

Sri Viswanathan, author of the article on 'Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni' in our previous issue, is one of the seniormost devotees of Bhagavan. He has a wealth of reminiscences about Bhagavan as well as extensive knowledge of his teachings and of the scriptures. Since Bhagavan left the body Sri Viswanathan has suffered much from ill health and has been mostly away from here. Now he is in fairly sound health and has

taken up his abode at the Ashram again. This will be a great boon to visitors eager for accounts of Bhagavan's life and teachings.

It is noticeable how many of the visitors who come here leave with the intention of returning and how few seem able to do so. Circumstances seem to favour a first visit but rather to obstruct a return. One of the fortunate ones to come back here is Sarah Farrand who came for a few days two years ago and is now here for a much longer stay.

She writes: "Whenever any one asks me about Sri Ramanasramam I tend to eulogize unreservedly, especially in England where distance giving rise to nostalgia, lends added charm. But a return visit this year convinces me that I haven't exaggerated at all. The old magic began to operate from the moment when I saw the silhouette of Arunachala by twilight as the train approached Tiruvannamalai. The burdensome memories of hectic weeks in Bombay and



Sarah Farrand

Delhi as well as the weariness resulting from three days spent travelling in third class railway compartments began to fall away and now, two weeks later, I feel the same sense of lightness and unconcern for either past or future. My problems have been handed over to Another—One who is far more capable of dealing with them. Some would call it self-delusion, but in my heart of hearts I know that this special, indescribable 'something' that lures people here from all corners of the earth is very real. I also know that I shall have to return again and again."

Another welcome returner is Peter Bright. He came here first in 1960 and made many friends here. After his return to England he kept up connection with the Ashram and in particular became an enthusiastic supporter of 'The Mountain Path' after its launching (as shown in his letter to the Editor on page 161 of our October issue). It has now become possible for him to return here, this time with the idea of settling down.

No less welcome than unexpected was another visit we received from Jerry Stofsky and Annie

Alt, the concert pianists mentioned in our Ashram Bulletin of April 1964.

ASHRAM DOCTOR

We have again an Ashram doctor, a post formerly held by Dr. K. Shiva Rao, whose obituary appeared in our issue for January this year. Dr. V. P. Ramaswami Iyer L.M.P., an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan, is a retired Civil Assistant Surgeon from 1949 to 1960. He has come to live at Bhagavan's Ashram as a devotee attending to the medical needs of people here as an act of service and devotion.



Dr. Ramaswami Iyer

ASHRAM NURSE

There is also an Ashram nurse, Miss Arlette Hans from France, who first came here for a short visit in 1962 and has now returned for a longer stay. She is a trained nurse who has had some years experience among the Eskimoes. From the Arctic to the tropics, from 76 below zero, she has come in the hottest part of the year when it is over 100 above.



Arlette Hans is one of those devotees who is wise enough to see the benefit (as pointed out in our editorial of January 1965) of having at least a part time occupation and not aspiring to spend the whole day in meditation.

Miss Arlette Hans

OBITUARY

'Maha Yoga' and other works by 'Who' have been widely read and appreciated both in India and abroad. Their author, Sri Lakshmana Sarma, passed away on May 3rd this year at the age of 86. He was a lawyer by profession and served for a while as a judge in Pudukottai State, but most of his life was devoted to Vedanta and to naturopathy. Sitting at the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, he wrote a much appreciated commentary on Bhagavan's 'Forty Verses'. Apart from that, he wrote 'Maha Yoga' in English, 'Ulladu Narpadu Urai' in Tamil and 'Sri Ramana Hridayam' in Sanskrit verse. He rendered selected verses from Muruganar's 'Guru Vachaka Kovai' into both Sanskrit and English under the title 'Guru Ramana Vachanamala'. He translated Bhagavan's 'Forty Verses' also into Sanskrit.

Sri Sarma had a passion for nature cure. Apart from writing a book on the subject, he was the founder-director of the Nature Cure Institute at Pudukottai and editor of the monthly journal *Life Natural*.

May he find peace at the feet of Sri Bhagavan who was his Guru and Master in this life.

Echammal, now no longer living, was one of the best known devotees of Bhagavan in the early days before the Ashram was built. Her younger sister Venu-Ammal, was also a staunch devotee. Venu-Ammal passed away recently at the house of her nephew at Vilapakkam near Polur. Venu-Ammal rendered signal service to Sri Bhagavan's mother at the time of her illness. She became a life member of the Ashram only two days prior to her demise.

May her soul rest in peace.

The October issue of *The Mountain Path* will be largely on the subject of orthodoxy.

The January 1966 issue will be dedicated to Ramana Sat-Guru. Any who wish to write for it are requested to submit their contribution in good time.

INTRODUCING

Many of the devotees of Bhagavan are familiar with the name of Nagamma from her published volumes of 'Letters from Sri Ramanasramam'. Readers of *The Mountain Path* will recall that most issues up to now have contained such a letter and will have been struck by the sensitivity and close observation with which they record not only Bhagavan's words but the tone and manner in which he spoke.

Nagamma is a Brahmin widow dressed in the plain white sari that tradition demands. She has little formal education and speaks no language but her native Telugu. It may be recalled that this was no great handicap at the Ashram, since Bhagavan knew Telugu and answered questions in it.

Owing to domestic misfortunes, Nagamma was thrown much on her own resources in early life and solaced herself by the study of classical (which means spiritual) Telugu literature. She herself developed a literary bent and wrote a number of books both in prose and verse.

On coming to Bhagavan Nagamma renounced her literary ambitions, just as did Muruganar (for an introduction to whom see P. 244 of our issue of October 1964). Like him, she vowed her literary talent thenceforth entirely to Bhagavan's

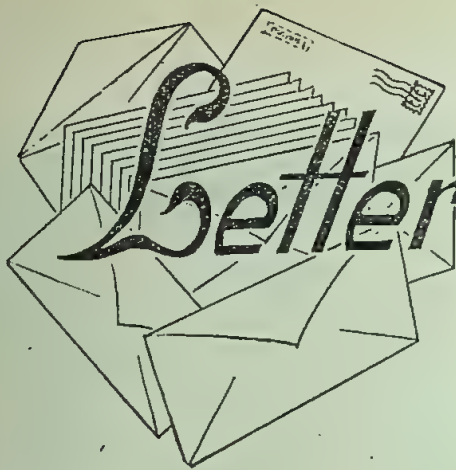


service. Sitting at his feet, day in day out, she felt a powerful urge to record the wisdom and wit of his replies, the graciousness of his presence, the beauty and occasional sternness of his manner. Her brother, D. S. Sastri, was manager of a bank in Madras and could only occasionally take a few days off to come to Bhagavan; so Nagamma began writing down her observations and impressions in the form of letters to him. The first 75 of these, carefully perused by Bhagavan, were published by the Ashram during his lifetime. Another 60 were published after Bhagavan had left the body. Both volumes D. S. Sastri translated into English and the Ashram published them.

Nagamma does not now live permanently at Tiruvannamalai. With her brother's assistance she has established herself in a small house at Vijayawada in the Telugu land among a group of like-minded people who often look to her for advice. She is, however, still a frequent visitor here and even those who cannot speak her language welcome the warm friendliness of her smile.



Nagamma



Letters TO THE EDITOR

Recently I enjoyed a remarkable instance of Bhagavan's Grace. I work in a London office which is being renovated structurally; the noise of the powerful electric drills stabbing into the brickwork was positively maddening — like a thousand dentists' drills vibrating through my soul. At home I prayed Bhagavan to stop this noise—a seemingly impossible request. Next day I was dismayed to find that the drilling was still in progress and I must confess that I felt quite resentful (if that's the right word) that Bhagavan could have failed me.

Then a remarkable thing happened—I soon became aware that I was no longer noticing this terrific noise: for lengthening periods it simply was not registering on my mind, thus enabling me to work undisturbed.

Of course, Bhagavan knows best! Had he caused the noise to cease I should have remained vulnerable to future noises. As it is, I no longer care what disturbance I may meet—a most satisfactory state of affairs in this excessively noisy metropolis.

Please add my name and address to the 'Correspondence Network'. It is an excellent scheme for those who, like myself, feel exiled from their spiritual home at Sri Ramanasramam. I was happy to see in the April issue the name of my dear Ashram acquaintance Nell Sharp. Greetings to her!

In this issue I very much like your and Prof. Kulkarni's translation of and invaluable notes on the first chapter of the Gita.

FRANCIS ALLEN,
London.

In the January issue of *The Mountain Path* there is an article about 'The Poet-Saint Tulsidas' by T. Krishnaji. Will you kindly let me know where I can get an English biography of Tulsidas.

P. SUKUMARAN,
Tellicherry.

I had already written to say that there is none when I received a letter from Orient Longmans Ltd., Nicol Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay-1, informing me that, on the request of the author, Chandra Kumari Handoo (whom I do not know) they were sending me a copy of a newly published book on the life and works of Tulsidas. The book is entitled 'Tulasidasa'. It is priced Rs. 18.

Editor.

The April issue of *The Mountain Path* is splendid. I liked particularly the piece on Kundalini by Unnamulai. It is so genuine and what she says is true. The break through of the Shakti does not of itself imply realization. The experience repeats itself and each time it does so the possibility is confirmed till the experience deepens into a solid realization. I have known of many instances where the break through has occurred but has not brought about any decisive change in the consciousness. It opens the passage. The ascent of the Kundalini through each of the 'granthi' indicates 'conquest' of the principles governed by that centre; but conquest is not actually achieved by the mere fact of the Kundalini passing through. The possibility is created and the conquest is to be achieved by repeated ascents and the assimilation of their results.

M. P. PANDIT,
Pondicherry

The article on the Sri Chakra at Ramanasramam by Krishna Bhikshu is a highly educative and thought-provoking exposition of Sri Vidya. The central idea of Sri Chakra has to be rightly understood. The bindu and trikonas form a unity. In other words they are parts of a divine whole. This idea is emphasised in the text which speaks of the relativity of the chakras as one of the 'Avina bhava sambandham'. One chakra cannot

exist without the other. We miss the mark if we say that each more outer chakra is a grosser form of the preceding one; it is more true to say that each is an indivisible part of the whole.

K. HARIHARA IYER,
Sivaganga.

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When I was in Pondicherry recently a friend of mine gave me the scorpion yantra which appeared in your journal. On May 4 I had the occasion to use this remarkable yantra on a girl of about 12 in my village. A scorpion stung the tip of the index finger of her right hand at about 8 a.m. I contacted her at about 9 a.m. or a little before. There was a burning sensation in her whole hand right up to the wrist. I made the yantra on the back of her hand four times in all, each one below the other, until I reached the middle of her index finger. The pain gradually receded until it was confined to the tip of the finger. It remained there for a long time, though it had left the hand and the first two palanges of the finger. I was myself amazed at this remarkable cure.

M. R. JAHAGIRDAR,
Headmaster, S. S. M. Shala,
Chadchan, Bijapur District.

Perhaps it was because the operator stopped the yantra before reaching the actual spot of the sting that the pain still continued in that spot.

Editor.

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The article 'A Yantra for Scorpion Stings' by Ethel Merston in your April issue should prove a boon to people living in scorpion infested parts. I learned the yantra some five years back and have used it scores of times and find that it relieves pain instantaneously.

SWAMI KRISHNANAND,
Degaon, Maharashtra

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Prof. K. Swaminathan's review of 'From Literature to Religion' by D. S. Sarma was both evocative and trenchant. What particularly appealed to me was the sentence in a quotation from this book: "The Self is realized not by one's doing something but by one's refraining from doing anything, by remaining still and simply being what one really is." I understand better now the words from the psalm: "Be still and know that I am God."

G. G. R. KRISHNAMMA,
Secunderabad.

The 'Letters to the Editor' section is a great boon to 'The Mountain Path' readers in that they can express their doubts and difficulties and get them solved. I wish also to claim the same privilege. There are two short sentences in the book 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words' which defy my understanding. If you will kindly explain, their significance I shall be ever grateful to you. They are:

"Be still and know that I am God" and
"I am that I am."

R. BALASUBRAMANIAM.

It so happens that neither of these two sentences is original to the Maharshi. Both are quoted by him from the Bible, Old Testament, the first from the Psalms and the second from Genesis.

"Be still and know that I am God" means: "Keep the mind still, without thoughts, and know that the 'I am', the sense of being, in you is God."

"I am that I am" or "Being is" is the reply that God gave to Moses when Moses asked what he should say if the Israelites in Egypt asked him who had sent him to them and authorised him to act as their leader and deliverer. "Say that 'I am' sent you, that the Being or the Self sent you." Moses was asking the Name of God and was told that 'I am' is the Name. Moses is the mind or spirit of aspiration in a man that makes him undertake the quest; the Israelites and Egyptians are the down-trodden good tendencies and triumphant evil tendencies in him when the quest or sadhana starts; 'I am' is the consciousness of Being in the heart that illumines and inspires him.

Editor.

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I would like to know:

(a) If there is any difference between the technique of 'whence am I?' and that of 'what am I?' or 'who am I?'

(b) The technique of 'whence am I?'

(c) The technique of 'what am I?' (or 'who am I?')

I have puzzled over this for a very long time. May I know whether the Maharshi used to say 'what am I?' or 'who am I?'

'Whence am I?' seems to seek the source of the 'I' without bothering about its nature.

'What am I?' and 'who am I?' seem to analyse the nature of 'I'.

DR. KRISHAN,
Chandigarh.

Bhagavan did sometimes tell a devotee to find out where the I-thought arises in the body. This was a way of teaching concentration on the heart at the right side.

More often he told enquirers to ask 'who am I?'. As explained on page 194 of our issue of July 1964, the cryptic Tamil form is 'nan—yar' (I—Who), not distinguishing between 'who' and 'what'. There is no real difference and the question is not analytical. It is a spiritual, not a mental, exercise, and therefore Bhagavan insisted that no answer the mind can give can be right. It is rather an attempt to suspend thought and feel the pure being or I-ness of you. That comes to feeling the being-consciousness that survives when thinking stops.

Editor,

I take the liberty to congratulate you on your excellent magazine. Its coming always causes great joy in our home. My wife's and my greatest desire is to go to Tiruvannamalai some time in the future and stay at Bhagavan's lotus feet.

Now, if it is permitted, I want to contribute to 'our' Mountain Path. I have noticed that in general our epoch is still wrongly called Kali Yuga in spite of the fact that we already entered the Dwapara Yuga 264 years ago.

HALMAGYI TIBOR,
Porto Alegre, Brazil.

From here Mr. Tibor continues with a detailed calculation of the Yugas. Actually there is much disagreement on this theme, some holding that the Kali Yuga or spiritually dark age is just beginning, others that it is in mid course and others that it is ending. The most usual opinion is that it began with the Battle of Kurukshetra at which the BHAGAVAD GITA was enunciated, 5066 years ago and is now approaching its end. Without wishing to enter into any such technical discussion, it may be well to remind 'Mountain Path' readers that Bhagavan was once asked for a decision on the subject and replied: "What is yuga? The wise man is always in sattya yuga." That is to say: Why occupy ourselves with the state of the world when it rests with us what state we are in?

Editor,

You are doing the most wonderful work in editing *The Mountain Path*, and in reading it I feel as if Bhagavan was sitting before me. Never before have I felt His presence so fully and

vividly as in reading this quarterly. All the five issues received have articles which bring Bhagavan shining before us. The printing, get-up, selection of advertisements, articles and handling of the matter in such a delicate and firm manner, in the tradition of Bhagavan, warm my heart and make me feel as if I was sitting in the Old Darshan Hall before Bhagavan.

BHAGAVAT PRASAD SINGH,
New York.

I have received a sample copy of your very interesting magazine and have deeply appreciated its contents, in particular the magnificent texts of Ramana Maharshi, whose 'Collected Works' have been reviewed by me in French.

FATHER THOMAS MERTON,
Abbey of Gethsemani,
Trappist, Kentucky.

We highly esteem this tribute from the Trappist monk who has become one of the leading Catholic writers of the day.

Editor.

I wish I could put into words what *The Mountain Path* and the awareness of Ramana Maharshi's life and works has meant to me. I have long been a student of Joel Goldsmith and now that he has left for the invisible plane this new dimension of awareness seems to be completely at one with the rhythm of unfolding Consciousness.

I want to say too that every one of your articles and book reviews has been most inspiring to me. Thank you.

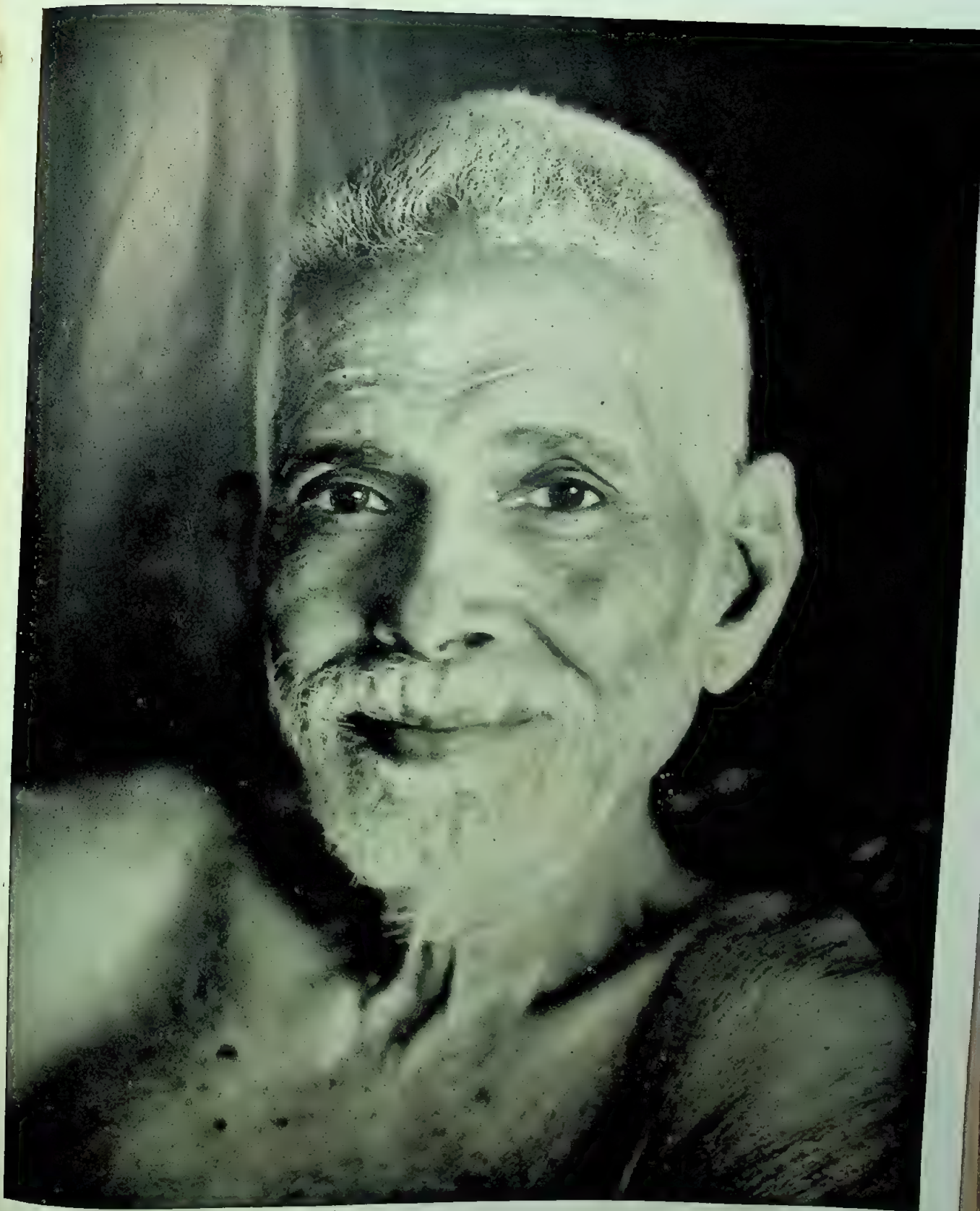
MRS. MAURINE MCINTYRE,
California.

I take the opportunity to say how much I enjoy '*The Mountain Path*'. I particularly appreciate the fact that contributions come from all quarters and am excited to find how all converge on one central truth.

MRS. SHEELA ATKINSON,
Orpington.

Congratulations on the issues to date. I particularly like the policy of devoting each issue to a particular aspect of spiritual life.

C. FREEMAN,
Seattle, U.S.A.





THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL. II

OCTOBER, 1965

No. 4

GUIDANCE AND ORTHODOXY

[EDITORIAL]

Closely allied to the question raised in our last editorial whether the guide need be a realized man is the question whether he need be orthodox and legitimately appointed. There is such a widespread reaction against orthodoxy today that many will consider this question superfluous; however there are still many in the various religions who cling to formal orthodoxy. Moreover the influence of Guenon is still considerable among Western seekers. On the whole it is a profoundly beneficent influence. He probably did more than any other person to awaken Western intellectuals to their lost heritage by reminding them that here is a Goal and there are paths to the Goal. However he insisted that the path must be orthodox, no matter in what religion, and the guide duly authenticated. He illustrated this with an analogy to ordination. It is preferable in the Catholic Church for the priest who performs the sacraments to be a saintly man, but they are valid even if he is not, whereas they would be invalid if performed by a more saintly man who was not an ordained priest. Throughout history, he insisted, the same rule has applied to the granting of initiation and guidance by a guru, and it still applies and always must.

Let us first state what is the orthodox pattern. A disciple receives initiation from a Guru and strives along his path, under his guidance, until he receives authorization from him to act as a guru himself and carry on the spiritual transmission in the same initiatic order. It is better if he is a realized man, but he can give valid initiation and guidance even if he is not, while one who is not the duly appointed successor to a chain of gurus cannot even though he may be realized.

First the question of the validity of initiation given by a guru who is duly authorized but not a realized man. Of this there can be no doubt; only, as I pointed out in my last editorial, it will be of a low order of potency and there may be grave dangers attached to it.

What then of the realized man who is not the validly appointed successor to a chain of gurus? What is it that he lacks? According to the rigidly orthodox (and also on the analogy of Christian ordination of priests) what he lacks is affiliation with the Divine Source of the Grace which has flowed through the chain of gurus from its origin. But suppose he has realized his identity with

that Divine Source? Suppose he is that Divine Source? The direct vertical descent of Grace will pass through him, and who then is to bother about the horizontal flow from past ages? Only those with small, legalistic minds.

There is a story about the Maharshi that comes to mind in this connection. Nagamma's telling of it is given on another page in this issue.

There certainly are laws regulating the flow of Divine Grace, but the Grace is more than the law. Or it might be more accurate to say that a commonly applicable law is overridden by an emergency law. That guidance comes only through regular channels may be the commonly applicable law; but Divine Providence will not therefore leave men without succour in their time of need. To deny this possibility of overriding the regular law would be to attempt to tie the hands of God.

What of the predicament of those who in our times seek an authorised and realized guru and do not find one? As they look around they perceive, not in one religion but all, an aridity in the channels where Grace once flowed. They hear strident voices proclaiming themselves gurus but will do well to remember Christ's prediction that there would be false Christs and false prophets to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect. Christ's saying that he who seeks will find is a universal law; but a law must have some technique, some means of action; what is this in an age when the former life lines to those struggling in the turbulent waters of samsara have been withdrawn or have rotted and become unfit to bear the weight of a man? Willing to follow an authorized and realized guru in any religion, they look around and do not find one.

What adaptation has been made to the needs of the time? If ours is a time of emergency when a relaxation has come about in the formerly rigid laws of orthodoxy, the first persons to perceive this and react to it would naturally be the guides themselves; and it is noticeable that all the prominent

gurus of India from the time of Sri Ramakrishna onwards have diverged from the orthodox pattern outlined above.

Sri Ramakrishna himself had not one guru but two, one tantric and the other advaitic. He did not seek them out and devote his life to their service; it was they who came to him and, after acting as more or less technical janitors to open the gates for him, became his devotees.

Although he experienced and proclaimed the efficacy of Christianity and Islam also as paths to the Goal, he did not himself have foreign disciples; but his successors did. Nor can this be described as an aberration of Vivekananda's, as some Western critics would like it to be; for one of the first to initiate foreigners was Sarada Devi, the wife of Ramakrishna, whom Vivekananda and all the others revered. She justified her action, so far as she troubled to do so at all, by referring to a dream of Sri Ramakrishna's in which he saw himself in a foreign town surrounded by white followers. In telling her about it he interpreted it to mean that he would have many followers in the West.

Next there is the enigmatic Sai Baba, who lived at the turn of the century.¹ He had both a Hindu and a Muslim guru. He lived in a mosque but had Hindu disciples as well as Muslim and allowed them to perform ritualistic worship of him in the mosque in complete contravention of Islamic orthodoxy. The initiation that he gave to Hindus and Muslims alike was invisible, as the Maharshi's was later to be, with no mantra, no laying on of hands.

Sri Aurobindo was brought up in England and had a completely Western education. He returned to India at the age of twenty-one, knowing very little of his mother-country and not even speaking his mother-tongue, which was Bengali. He lost no time in learning Bengali and Sanskrit and flung himself into the struggle for independence

¹ For whom see an article in our issue of July, 1964. See also 'The Incredible Sai Baba' by Arthur Osborne, Orient Longmans, India, and Rider & Co., London.

with such zest that he soon became one of the leaders. During this phase of his life he had a yogic guru for a few weeks but did not follow up the training as it would have interfered with his political activities. After renouncing politics and settling down in Pondicherry he never met his guru again; nor did he take another. The guidance he later gave was quite different from the formalistic path of his guru; and it was given freely to Hindus and Westerners alike.

Swami Sivananda was a successful medical practitioner until middle life, when he renounced the world and withdrew into a cave in the Himalayas. He had a guru for a short period but seems to have owed little to him. Certainly it was his own more flexible form of guidance, that he gave to the disciples who later flocked to him; and he also gave it to Westerners as well as Hindus.

Swami Ramdas, a very lovable saint,² was also middle-aged when he renounced the world. He had no guru in the ordinary sense of the word. He simply took permission to use the Ram mantra from his father in virtue of the right every Brahmin has to give initiation to his own son. He visited Ramana Maharshi and received a wonderful outpouring of Grace from him³ but did not become his disciple — he did not follow his path and never returned to him. On becoming a Swami he gave initiation and guidance freely to Hindu and Western disciples alike.

Ananda Mayi Ma, the Bengali woman saint who is still living at the time of writing, is said never to have had a guru. She

is surrounded by an orthodox Brahmin entourage, but receives foreign disciples also and gives them instructions for their sadhana.

To crown all there is the case of the Maharshi himself. He attained Self-realization when still a schoolboy of sixteen by a single spontaneous act of Self-enquiry, with no human guru and no religious discipline.⁴ Later he gave his silent initiation to all who sought it earnestly and with understanding. He prescribed for them the path of Self-enquiry, free from religious forms — whatever the religion. Some Brahmins called him unorthodox. Those who understood said that he was orthodoxy itself; whatever he did was orthodox because he did it; he was higher than Manu, being the source from which Manu's authority derived. He was the Self from whom sanction and authority flow.

These are the best known but there have been and still are other guides also, less renowned but not necessarily less genuine. Two such are Swami Nityananda and Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath, described in our issues of April and July, respectively, this year. It would require rare arrogance for any one to proclaim that all these who speak with authority are wrong and it is blindness to hold that rigid formal orthodoxy is still necessary in spiritual guidance.

² For whom see an article in our issue of January, 1964.

³ Described in our issue of Jan. 1965, pp. 12-13.

⁴ See 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge', pp. 18-19, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

THE INDWELLER

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

He? — You? — I? — That which is
Indwells this body, sees the living world,
And is the world it sees. Pure bliss of being,
As on a spring day, couched upon a bank
Of grass and flowers, watching the clouds sail by —
For a brief moment thought - and fancy-free:
But now no moment, now a well known state.

INITIATION REJECTED

By NAGAMMA*

13-1-1949

For readers who do not know the background of the following story it should be explained that the great Shankaracharya, the 8th Century restorer of Advaita Vedanta, founded four orders of sannyasins in the four corners of India, north, south, east and west. A regular succession of gurus continued in these orders and became the upholders of Hindu orthodoxy. Every sannyasin is supposed to receive initiation and normally from an initiate of one of them. That is to say that a man cannot simply take sannyas; it has to be bestowed on him. Similarly a man is not supposed to act as a guru unless he himself has received initiation. The position of Bhagavan, living as a sannyasin and acting as a guru, was therefore technically incorrect. The point of the story is that he was above technicalities and was fully aware of the fact.

There was talk in Bhagavan's presence about a conference of the heads of mutts at Sivaganga, and in this connection a devotee said to Bhagavan: "It is said that a long time ago somebody from Sringeri Peetam came and asked Bhagavan to take initiation. Is that so?"

Bhagavan replied: "Yes, indeed. In the early days of my stay at Virupaksha Cave a shastri from Sringeri Mutt came to see me one morning. He spoke with me for a long time and fully understood what I said to him; then, before going into town for food, he approached me with folded hands and an air of devotion and said: "Swami, I have a request to make; please consider it." I asked what it was and he replied with great humility and an air of submission: "Swami, as you were born a Brahmin, is it not necessary that you should receive *diksha* (initiation) according to the sastras? Isn't that our ancient tradition? This is not unknown to you, so what need is there for me to explain? It is our wish to include your name also in the list we already have in the stanzas in praise of gurus. So if Bhagavan consents arrangements will be made to bring the necessary things and perform the rite here. Even if you don't want to wear the full ochre robe, you could at least wear an ochre loin-cloth (instead of the white one you wear now). Please give it your earnest consideration while I go down into the town for my

midday meal and let me have your answer when I come back at 3 o'clock. The people at our Mutt have heard of your great reputation and sent me here to speak with you about it." So saying, he went down the hill into town.

"Soon after he had left an old Brahmin came with a bundle that seemed to contain books. His face seemed somehow familiar. He put the bundle down as though he already knew me and said: 'Swami, I have just come and not even taken my bath yet. There is no one to look after this bundle, so please look after it.' So saying, he went away.

"As soon as he had gone it occurred to me for some reason to open the bundle and look at the books. On opening it I was immediately struck by the title 'Arunachala Mahatmyam' (The Greatness of Arunachala) in Sanskrit on one of them. I was not previously aware that this Tamil work existed in a Sanskrit version also. I opened the book and my eye fell immediately on the stanza in which Ishvara (God) says: 'Those who live within three yojanas (thirty miles) of this place (Arunachala) will attain Liberation free from all attachments even if they have not received initiation. Such is my decree.'

"Seeing this, I said to myself: Splendid; now I have a good answer to give to that

* For an introduction to whom see our issue of July, 1965.

shastri. So I copied the sloka out and tied the bundle up again as it was before. Then I sat in meditation. When I opened my eyes again the bundle was gone. When the shastri returned in the afternoon I showed him the stanza. Being a learned man he saw at once that there was nothing he could say against it, so he bowed down before me with great respect and devotion and left. It seems that he told the whole story to the Shankaracharya Narasimha Bhaṭṭi and the latter regretted the episode and told his followers to make no such attempts in future.

"There were a number of other occasions too when people came and tried to convert

me to their ways. I used to listen to all they had to say but would never consent to take initiation. I always found some excuse such as this to get out of it."

One of the devotees asked whether the old Brahmin who brought the bundle of books returned.

Bhagavan said : "I don't remember whether he did or not. I only know that the bundle was not there. We got what we needed. Isn't that enough? It means that Arunachala Himself appeared in that guise."

He then remained silent.

THE FIRE

By PRANAV

Lord, Thy messenger entered my kingdom
 And enkindled a tiny flame. It has
 Become a stupendous conflagration,
 And I see the city that I had built
 Now lies a heap of grey ashes.
 No more shall bricks and mortar be. Instead
 Thou hast laid out anew a garden vast
 Where pines of aspiration touch the Heaven
 And where jasmin, lotus and lovely rose
 Open to Thy red-golden smile at dawn.

ABOVE ORTHODOXY AND UNORTHODOXY

By KRISHNA BIKSHU

The Maharshi was criticised by some in his lifetime for being orthodox, by others for being unorthodox. There were literalist Brahmins who would not go to his Ashram because it was not orthodox, modernists who would not go because it was. A profound explanation was given by the late Sundaresa Iyer, himself an orthodox Brahmin, whose obituary appears in our issue of April, 1965: "Bhagavan was above orthodoxy and unorthodoxy. He was higher than Manu and could not therefore be bound by Manu. He was himself the Source of orthodoxy and therefore whatever he did or said was orthodox because he did or said it, whether according to the sastras or not."

The Maharshi was establishing a spiritual path open alike to Brahmins and non-Brahmins, Hindus and non-Hindus; and he knew when and by whom and to what extent traditional orthodoxy had to be observed or dispensed with.

Krishna Bikshu, author of the article, 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam', in our issue of April, 1965, elucidates the Maharshi's attitude in the following article, showing from the wealth of his observation during his long association with the Master, how both the blind defenders and the blind attackers of orthodoxy were liable to be offended by it.

An upholder of formal orthodoxy was speaking accusingly to Sambasiva Rao, late secretary of the Sri Ramanasramam Committee: "We learn that your Guru, the Maharshi, does not observe the rules prescribed by the Sastras for daily conduct or the regulations governing the life of a sannyasin."

"No, he does not," Sambasiva Rao agreed.

"We learn also that he has received no formal initiation into sannyas."

"No."

"And we hear that he chews pan, sits on a sofa with a mattress on it, drinks coffee and is accessible to untouchables."

"Yes, that is so."

"Then we can't accept his way of life. He may be a great man, but he sets a bad example and people will naturally imitate him. Thereby they incur sin which must be imputed to his leadership."

This was the view held by many orthodox pandits who could not see the Spirit for the letter. It is true that in Sri Ramanasramam many of the sastraic injunctions are not followed. The Ashram is built upon a former burial ground (which in itself is irregular) and therefore no part of the

Vedas except the Sri Rudra Sukta should be recited there; and yet it contains a Veda Patasala (school for learning to chant the Vedas). Not only that, but there is also a temple in which the worship of the Siva Linga and Sri Chakra is performed with full daily ritual including Vedic mantras and other holy texts. From this one might well conclude that Bhagavan considered the sastras and all scriptural injunctions useless. But it was not always so. I have observed incidents which showed how he discriminated between one case and another according to the need.

For instance, Major Chadwick, who, not being a Hindu, was not subject to the sastras, asked Bhagavan once whether eating onions was not an impediment to spiritual progress, and Bhagavan agreed that it was. Chadwick thereupon gave up onions completely. But they still continue to be used in the Ashram kitchen.

He took meticulous care to see that the injunctions of the sastras were carried out in the building and consecration of the Ashram temple.

In the lifetime of Bhagavan there was a screen across the dining hall separating the

Brahmins from the others. Bhagavan himself sat against the wall at right angles to both and in view of both. This is important to remember for the incident that follows. The screen implied an interdict on interdining between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. One day a relative of Bhagavan (and therefore a Brahmin) demanded to eat among the non-Brahmins but the Sarvadhikari (Ashram manager) would not allow it. They were disputing about it when Bhagavan came on the scene and asked what was the matter.

"He says that he has no caste," the Sarvadhikari told him: "that all are equal in the presence of Bhagavan and that he is simply a human being not bound by the shackles of caste, creed, clime or colour."

"Oh, is that so?" Bhagavan said, looking surprised: "then in that case you are wrong to insist that he should eat with the Brahmins."

But then, turning to his cousin, Bhagavan remarked: "But you too are wrong. These people here feel that they are non-Brahmins. You have no caste feeling so how can you sit among them? There is only one person here who has the feeling of being neither Brahmin nor non-Brahmin, and that is myself. So," calling to the attendant, "place a leaf-plate for him by my side; let him sit with me." The young man was shocked by the implications of this proposal and immediately took his place at the Brahmin side.

Now let us consider the standpoint of those who condemn all orthodoxy. A visitor once said to me: "I hope your Bhagavan is not hide-bound, following all the rules of Hindu orthodoxy?"

I replied cautiously: "Let me understand you before committing myself to an answer. First of all, do you believe that Bhagavan is a realized man? And secondly, what do you mean by Hindu orthodoxy?"

"How can I say whether he is realized or not? You say he is. And as for orthodoxy, you are only pretending not to know. I mean all the rules that govern your daily conduct—eating, sleeping, bathing etc., and your social conduct among yourselves and

towards others: the rules that were made for you by the so-called Sages of ancient times, Manu and the rest."

"You are right insofar as neither you nor I can exactly evaluate the position of Bhagavan," I said: "But as for orthodoxy, have you ever investigated the purpose of the Sages in laying down these rules of life? Have you tried to understand them? Or have you tried to follow them and noted the results in a scientific spirit?"

"What!" he exclaimed: "If primitive people invented nonsensical superstitious rules and called them dharma am I to follow them without proof or logic? That's impossible."

"Then you are unscientific," I replied. "Before you condemn a law you should first follow it and find out by experiment whether its results agree with what is claimed for it. Anyway, I will explain it to you."

"The ancient Hindus recognised four aims in life, which they called purusharthas. These are: dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Dharma is the law of being; wealth (artha) has to be earned and life enjoyed (kama) according to dharma. The final result will be Moksha, that is Liberation from bondage. He who follows this course is an integrated personality. He has harmonized his prana or vital force with his mind and characteristics or samskaras. A man acts according to his samskaras, that is his tendencies inherited from past lives. His inclinations result from the reaction of these past tendencies to present environment. They should be directed to achievement of the purusharthas culminating in Moksha. The ancient Seers or Rishis had the vision to see the implications of every word, gesture or act of a man and on this basis framed rules which would, they said, if properly followed, help him to achieve his purpose in life. He could pursue the true goal either in society or as a sannyasin outside society, but only by following the rules. His earthly life should be so conducted as to lead to the final goal of Moksha."

"Spiritual endeavour to achieve this indicated end is called sadhana and he who

dedicates his life to it is a sadhaka. It involves cultivation, control and final conquest of body, emotions, senses and the entire ego and leads to Liberation. The Seers have noted the whole discipline required to this end. Control is a hard task. Control of a running horse can only be achieved step by step, and so it is with the ego. It is the Liberation towards which it leads that is the justification of sadhana. The ancient Seers did not claim to have invented rules for it, only to have seen the result of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical disciplines on a man. They laid down the law of being and working of all aspects of the human personality. That is why the smritis that go by their names are said to be merely *suhrut sammita*, advising as a friend, not compelling as a ruler. They merely indicate the road leading to the required end. If you break the rules they adumbrate they do not punish, only you do so at your own peril, that is peril to the success of your venture.

"Take the question of food — just one among many. Modernists tell us that the food we eat has nothing to do with our spiritual progress; but the Chandogya Upanishad says that the subtlest part of the food you eat becomes your mind. Bhagavan said the same, and it is indicated in the last sentence of his 'Self-Enquiry'. And Krishna in the XIth Canto of the Bhagavata lays down the several types of purity necessary for the sadhaka, one of them being pure food. Even if we think the opinions of modern reformers outweigh the statements of the Vedic Rishis, the Maharshi and Sri Krishna, should we not be scientific and give what they say a fair trial and note the results?"

Returning to the question of the Maharshi: it is true that he did not personally follow all that is laid down in the scriptures regarding food, but he did not need to, since he was not a sadhaka but a Mukta, having already achieved the Goal. It is true also that he allowed a good deal of licence to his followers, but that does not necessarily mean that he approved of it; simply that his way was rather to influence than to command.

The true command should come from within, leading to voluntary, not enforced, right action. He never ordered Devaraja Mudaliar to become a vegetarian, but when the latter was hesitating whether to do so or not, wondering whether he would find the food sufficiently nutritious, and asked Bhagavan's advice (as he relates in his book 'My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana') Bhagavan assured him categorically that he would. Another example: once when my brother Sri Venkatesa, author of a Hindi Life of Bhagavan, came to the Ashram he was offered coffee and told that he could drink it safely as it was Bhagavan's prasad.¹ Like many sadhakas he did not take coffee, finding that it disturbed his equanimity, so he hesitated. Before accepting it he asked Bhagavan outright: "Am I to take this as your prasad?" Bhagavan immediately replied: "No. These people want to drink coffee and so to justify themselves they offer it first to me and then call it my prasad."

There was a still more extraordinary case in the early years of the Ashram. Some of the sadhakas used to take *bhang* (a hallucinatory drug sometimes used by sadhus), and they also would offer it to Bhagavan first to justify themselves. Bhagavan would accept it when offered and it had no effect on his serenity of mind, since he had no mind to be disturbed. Once they offered some to Sri Kavyakantha Muni also,² thinking thereby to justify its use by sadhakas, since Bhagavan was not a sadhaka but a Mukta. Sri Ganapathi Muni saw through their trick, however, and was about to curse them for their audacity, but the motherly spirit awoke in his wife, who was present on the occasion, and she induced him to leave the scene, so that the miscreants escaped punishment.

Two things may be deduced from these examples: one that adventitious aids to sadhana, such as pure and sattvic food, are very important and not to be despised or

¹ Prasad or prasadam is some article, usually of food or drink, given to a spiritual man and then received back as a vehicle of his grace.

² For an article on whom see our issue of April, 1965.

neglected; the other that Bhagavan did not adhere rigidly to the rules himself or enforce them strictly in his Ashram but approved of people who did follow them. In fact he disapproved of both extremes, of exaggerated formalism on the one hand and hedonistic laxity on the other. Indeed, on one occasion when Bhagavan was asked to define the true Brahmin he included among the qualifications the ability to cook his own food so that he would not have to break his caste dharma when wandering in search of knowledge.

In a general way his mode of life did, after all, conform with the pattern of the Sastras. He would rise with the calling of the birds, as prescribed by them. He would hear the early morning chanting of the Vedas, take his bath, etc., and then engage in his normal routine activities. The shades of evening would find him absorbed in contemplation of the Self, again as laid down by the Sastras. He neither over-ate nor starved. He followed the Gita precept about keeping to a proper diet, his waking time following a proper mode of life, sleeping properly and spending his waking time properly. The Bhagavata devotes a full canto to the daily routine followed by Sri Krishna as a model for his clansmen. When they failed to follow it and took to drunkenness a catastrophe ensued leading to their complete extermination. But all these rules of life are really advice given to one whose sincere purpose in life is the quest of Liberation. How many of us can truthfully lay our hands on our hearts and assert that this really is our goal in life? Sadhana for many of us is no more than a hobby or a secondary interest. Times have indeed changed since the Seers laid down the rules of life. Insofar as a pleasurable worldly life is now all the purushartha we follow we can indeed call them primitives and dispense with their guidance.

The brunt of the modernist attack is against the rules of varna dharma, commonly called caste.³ And to gladden the heart of modernists it must be admitted that Bhagavan did not follow the social code laid down by the Sastras, since he allowed

non-Brahmins untouchables and foreigners free access to him and sponsored the daily chanting of the Vedas with all sitting shoulder to shoulder listening to them. But he knew what he was doing. Those who came to him were his people, independent of the accident of birth. And, as I mentioned above in connection with the incident of the dining hall, he himself belonged to no caste and could not be bound by caste rules. Indeed he actually stated this once in a deposition he made to a commission that came from a lawcourt to interview him in connection with a fraudulent claim some one had made to ownership of the Ashram. Asked about caste, he asserted that he was 'atiasrami', that is outside the framework of the four varnas and the four asramas or stages of life. Indeed, one could say that there was no individual Ramana; and it is noteworthy that he never signed his name. There was no individual to sign. The individual Ramana had become extinct and merged in the Universal. Therefore it is futile to ask whether we, as individuals, can model ourselves on his conduct.

There is a warning and a paradox in this. He was the highest model of rectitude and wisdom, and yet we cannot model our personal and social conduct entirely on him, since we are seekers and he was not, and we are therefore bound by obligations from which he had become free. He was and is the Brahman and had therefore nothing to achieve and required no discipline as an aid to achievement. This paradox is explained in the Bhagavata in a warning given by Suka Deva to Parikshit: "Transgression of the normal dharma by the spiritually perfect is an exception and they are too eminent for it to bring about their downfall. Fire devours everything but is not said to be polluted thereby. One who is not at that final eminence should not even dream of doing such things. If he is obstinate enough to try he will perish."

³ 'Caste' is used to translate four Sanskrit words: Varna, jati, kula and vamsa. The four varnas are the basic classes of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra which embrace many jatis.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By FRANCIS ALLEN

This is the story of how Bhagavan, whom I never met, came, I believe, into my life. During World War II, I was posted from England to Ceylon, where I became so interested in Theravada Buddhism that I determined to enter the Sangha. I was informed by monks there that they could not give me ordination without first obtaining my parents' consent.

After being demobilized in England I joined a small London group studying Theravada, another member of which was a lady who, it transpired, had been to Tiruvannamalai. I discovered this one day when I heard her telling a mutual friend how she had gone to Sri Ramanasramam with a personal problem. For the first time in my life I then heard the name Sri Ramana Maharshi. "Bhagavan" she explained, had merely smiled and indicated that she settle herself upon a mat in His hall. Whereupon, without words passing between them, the solution to her trouble had soon presented itself to her mind. This, she informed her London friend, was nothing unusual where Bhagavan was concerned.

I made up my mind there and then to break my return journey to Ceylon at Tiruvannamalai. Unfortunately, although my father had agreed to my ordination as a Buddhist monk, my mother withheld her permission, fearing it was merely a passing impulse on my part. I had returned to a good job in London, and she was reluctant to see me disappear, perhaps for ever, into a far away monastic life.

Months passed, until one evening I returned home from a particularly trying day at the office feeling tired and looking, I dare say, dejected. My mother greeted me with the words: 'I can see you are as keen as ever to go back to Ceylon. You have my permission, if you think it will make you happy.'

That day was April 14th, 1950. The very day that, miles and miles away from



London, Bhagavan left the body. It was not until I arrived in Bombay that I discovered this; and imagining that Bhagavan was no more, I went on to Colombo ...

It was another few years before I met Ethel Merston who suggested I should read Arthur Osborne's book "Ramana Maharshi". After that, with the assistance of Ronald Rose, I arrived at Sri Ramanasramam.

What, I wonder, would Bhagavan have advised me if I had visited Him en route to the Buddhist monastery? Had He warned me of what was going to come of it, I should have found it impossible to believe. At that time I had set my heart on embracing the monastic life, and any dissuasion would not have deterred me, yet would have filled me with forboding uneasiness. No; I imagine that, simply smiling, Bhagavan would have left me to go ahead and work out in my own way what was a particularly complicated part of my destiny.

AL - KHIZR

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

There is an Arabian Nights-like story in the Qur'an of an obviously symbolical journey that Moses made under the guidance of "one of Our servitors to whom We had granted mercy and knowledge",¹ that is to say a realized man. Three times the guide tested Moses by performing an apparently outrageous action, and three times Moses failed to restrain his indignation. The name of the guide is not given, but he is traditionally held to be the prophet Khizr, who is nowhere mentioned by name in the Qur'an.

What is remarkable about this is that Moses is recognized in the Qur'an as a great prophet, whereas on this occasion he appears as an obtuse pupil. The explanation seems to be that Moses is the prophet most associated with the law, and this story is meant to show the law or exoteric religion or outer orthodoxy to be an inferior, a pupil and unintelligent over against esoteric or initiatic guidance.

Guenon, whose knowledge of symbolism was extensive, equated Khizr with the equally enigmatic Biblical figure of Melchisedec. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is referred to as "Called of God, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec."² Just as Khizr is represented in the Qur'an as superior to Moses, so does the author of this Epistle represent Melchisedec as superior to Abraham, stating that Abraham paid tithes to him and he conferred his blessing on Abraham. Further, he is called "King of righteousness and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace."³ He is ranked higher than the Levitical priesthood, the descendants of Aaron. "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God; he abideth a priest continually."⁴

It is quite evident that what we have to do with here is not an individual but an esoteric order with direct spiritual realization which raises its members above human lineage and gives it higher authority than the exoteric orthodoxy of the regular priesthood. The writer of this epistle is obviously a Hebrew writing for Hebrews, and the implication for him of Christ's being "a priest after the order of Melchisedec" is Christ's authority to override Jewish law and orthodoxy. There was as yet no Christian law and orthodoxy.

After Biblical times no more is heard of Melchisedec. In Islam, however, Khizr remained an important legendary figure. Sufism, though less rigid than the shariat of exoteric Islam, developed a law and orthodoxy of its own. Every Sufi aspirant had to be duly initiated to a *tariqa*^t or Sufi path by the validly appointed head of the order successor to its whole chain of sheikhs. It was always recognized, however, that outside these orders there was the path of the *afraad* or solitary ones (singular *fard*) whose guide was Al-Khizr.

In our own day the spirit of guidance has almost dried up in Islam, as in the other religions, and it is wellnigh impossible to find a realized guide at the head of any *tariqat*. But the Compassionate always responds to men's aspiration, and we find to-day, in compensation, a less formal outpouring of Grace to those who seek. This is, therefore, the age of Al-Khizr. It is better to implore his guidance than to adhere to the formalities of a *tariqat* which has everything except the essential — the realization of its sheikh.

¹ Qur'an, XVII, 65-82.

² Hebrews, V, 10.

³ Ibid., VII, 2.

⁴ Ibid., VII, 3.

There is a Hindu story which illustrates this. Before the Battle of Kurukshetra, at which the Bhagavad Gita was enunciated, both sides, in canvassing allies, believed that they had a right to call on Krishna, the Lord of Mathura, for support. He declared that one side could have his army while he him-

self, unarmed, would support the other. The Kauravas chose his army and Arjuna chose Krishna. It was Arjuna who won. Let those who cling to formal orthodoxy without a realised guide consider which they are choosing, Krishna or his army.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

By A. RAO

Where the mighty river flows
A bleak, grey prison-castle rose
Wherein a lady dwelt, they say,
On whom a lifelong curse there lay :
Not to look out, not to go free,
Only a shadow-world to see,
Reflected in a glass,

Daylong a tapestry she wove,
With fantasy but without love.
Thus did the wise ones typify
The life of man, whose days flow by
In a shadow world of mundane things,
Weaving his vain imaginings,
Watching the shadows pass.

Until she saw her love ride by —
Daring to look though she should die,
She rose, cast from her the pretence,
Leaped toward truth, with no defence

But love. The mirror cracked. A shiver
Split the grey walls. The broad river,
Sweeping all things along,

Now bore her on to her true lot
In many-towered Camelot,
To meet the loved one face to face
And, dead to self, in mute embrace,
To find the two grown one through love
Beyond all joy for which she strove.
This was the ancient song.

The years flowed down upon the river,
And wisdom and all high endeavour,
Leaving a slum in Camelot.
A poet came and found the plot
And made a pretty tale of it.
Yet still the wisdom and the wit
Of the old sages shines in it.

He on whose destiny God has inscribed 'My Lover' rises above all ritual and laws of formal religion. The lover ignores worship in temple or mosque, being beside himself in God-intoxication.

— Sultan Abu Said Ibn Khair.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD

By FATHER THOMAS MERTON

Father Thomas Merton is widely known as a Trappist monk who has become famous through his books as an exponent of the deeper truth of Christian teaching, the truth of the Spirit which "bloweth where it listeth" and is not necessarily confined to any one Church or creed.

The Abbey of Gethsemani, where he lives and where this article was written, is a community of contemplative monks of the Cistercian Order (Trappists), famous for its dedication to silence, manual labour, solitude, meditation and liturgical worship. The Abbey was founded in Kentucky, one of the Southern States of the U.S.A., in 1848 by monks from France. The monks observe the Rule of St. Benedict in its strict interpretation and do not engage in teaching or in preaching, though in some exceptional cases they write books. There is one monastery of the same Order in Japan, another near Hong Kong, yet another in Indonesia, as well as several convents of nuns in Japan.

Can contemplation still find a place in the world of technology and conflict which is ours? Does it belong only to the past? The answer to this is that, since the direct and pure experience of reality in its ultimate root is man's deepest need, contemplation must be possible if man is to remain human. If contemplation is no longer possible, then man's life has lost the spiritual orientation upon which everything else — order, peace, happiness, sanity — must depend. But true contemplation is an austere and exacting vocation. Those who seek it are few and those who find it fewer still. Nevertheless, their presence witnesses to the fact that contemplation remains both necessary and possible.

Man has an instinctive need for harmony and peace, for tranquillity, order and meaning. None of these seem to be the most salient characteristics of modern society. Life in a monastery where the traditions and rites of a more contemplative age are still alive and still practised, cannot help but remind men that there once existed a more leisurely and more spiritual way of life — and that this was the way of their ancestors. Thus even into the confused pattern of Western life is woven a certain memory of contemplation. It is a memory so vague and so remote that it is hardly understood, and yet it can awaken the hope of recover-

ing inner peace. In this hope, modern man can perhaps entertain, for a brief time, the dream of a contemplative life and of a higher spiritual state of quiet, of rest, of untroubled joy. But a sense of self-deception and guilt immediately awakens in Western man a reaction of despair, disgust, rejection of the dream and commitment to total activism. We must face the fact that the mere thought of contemplation is one which deeply troubles the modern person who takes it seriously. It is so contrary to the modern way of life, so apparently alien, so seemingly impossible, that the modern man who even considers it finds, at first, that his whole being rebels against it. If the ideal of inner peace remains attractive the demands of the way to peace seem to be so exacting and so extreme that they can no longer be met. We would like to be quiet, but our restlessness will not allow it. Hence we believe that for us there can be no peace except in a life filled up with movement and activity, with speech, news, communication, recreation, distraction. We seek the meaning of our life in activity for its own sake, activity without objective, efficacy without fruit, scientism, the cult of unlimited power, the service of the machine as an end in itself. And in all these a certain dynamism is imagined. The life of frantic activity is invested with the noblest of qualities, as if it were the whole end and

happiness of man : or rather as if the life of man had no inherent meaning whatever and had to be given a meaning from some external source, from a society engaged in a gigantic communal effort to raise man above himself. Man is indeed called to transcend himself. But do his own efforts suffice for this ?

The reason for this inner confusion and conflict is that our technological society has no longer any place in it for wisdom that seeks truth for its own sake, that seeks the fulness of being, that seeks to rest in an intuition of the very ground of all being. Without wisdom, the apparent opposition of action and contemplation, of work and rest, of involvement and detachment, can never be resolved. Ancient and traditional societies, whether of Asia or of the West, always specifically recognized "the way" of the wise, the way of spiritual discipline in which there was at once wisdom and method, and by which, whether in art, in philosophy, in religion, or in the monastic life, some men would attain to the inner meaning of being, they would *experience* this meaning for all their brothers, they would so to speak bring together in themselves the divisions or complications that confused the life of their fellows. By healing the divisions in themselves they would help heal the divisions of the whole world. They would realize in themselves that unity which is at the same time the highest action and the purest rest, true knowledge and self-less love, a knowledge beyond knowledge in emptiness and unknowing ; a willing beyond will in apparent non-activity. They would attain to the highest striving in the absence of striving and of contention.

This way of wisdom is no dream, no temptation and no evasion, for it is on the contrary a return to reality in its very root. It is not an escape from contradiction and confusion for it finds unity and clarity only by plunging into the very midst of contradiction, by the acceptance of emptiness and suffering, by the renunciation of the passions and obsessions with which the whole world is "on fire". It does not withdraw

from the fire. It is in the very heart of the fire, yet remains cool, because it has the gentleness and humility that come from self-abandonment, and hence does not seek to assert the illusion of the exterior self.

Once a man has set his foot on this way, there is no excuse for abandoning it, for to be actually on the way is to recognize without doubt or hesitation that only the way is fully real and that everything else is deception, except insofar as it may in some secret and hidden manner be connected with "the way".

Thus, far from wishing to abandon this way, the contemplative seeks only to travel further and further along it. This journey without maps leads him into rugged mountainous country where there are often mists and storms and where he is more and more alone. Yet at the same time, ascending the slopes in darkness, feeling more and more keenly his own emptiness, and with the winter wind blowing cruelly through his now tattered garments, he meets at times other travellers on the way, poor pilgrims as he is, and as solitary as he, belonging perhaps to other lands and other traditions. There are of course great differences between them, and yet they have much in common. Indeed, the Western contemplative can say that he feels himself much closer to the Zen monks of ancient Japan than to the busy and impatient men of the West, of his own country, who think in terms of money, power, publicity, machines, business, political advantage, military strategy—who seek, in a word, the triumphant affirmation of their own will, their own power, considered as the end for which they exist. Is not this perhaps the most foolish of all dreams, the most tenacious and damaging of illusions ?

In any event, it is certain that the way of wisdom is not an evasion. Simply to evade modern life would be a futile attempt to abdicate from its responsibilities and a renunciation of advantages — and illusions. The contemplative way requires first of all and above all renunciation of this obsession with the triumph of the individual or collective will to power. For this aggressive

and self-assertive drive to possess and to exert power implies a totally different view of reality than that which is seen when one travels the contemplative way. The aggressive and dominative view of reality places at the centre the individual self with its bodily form, its feelings and emotions, its appetites and needs, its loves and hates, its actions and reactions. All these are seen as forming together a basic and indubitable reality to which everything else must be referred, so that all other things are also estimated in their individuality, their actions and reactions, and all the ways in which they impinge upon the interests of the individual self. The world is then seen as a multiplicity of conflicting and limited beings, all enclosed in the limits of their own individuality, all therefore complete in a permanent and vulnerable incompleteness, all seeking to find a certain completeness by asserting themselves at the expense of others, dominating and using others. This world becomes, then, an immense conflict in which the only peace is that which is accorded to the victory of the strong, and in order to taste the joy of this peace, the weak must submit to the strong and join him in his adventures so that they may share in his power. Thus there arises a spurious, inconclusive unity: the unity of the massive aggregate, the unity of those thrown together without love and without understanding by the accidents of the power struggle. Seen from the point of view of "the way" this unity is nothing but a collective monstrosity because it has no real reason for existing and is not a unity at all. However insistently it may claim for itself the dignities of a truly communal and human existence, it does not elevate man by a truly communal and interpersonal co-operation. It only drives him with mad and irresistible demands, exploiting him, alienating him from reality and demanding from him a blind irrational and total subjection. The life of the collective mass is such that it destroys in man the inmost need and capacity for contemplation. It dries up the living springs of compassion and understanding. It perverts the creative genius and destroys the innocent vision that is

proper to man in communion with nature. Finally the collective mass becomes a vast aggregate of organized hatred, a huge and organized death-wish, threatening its own existence and that of the entire human race.

The mission of the contemplative in this world of massive conflict and collective unreason is to seek the true way of unity and peace, without succumbing to the illusion of withdrawal into a realm of abstraction from which unpleasant realities are simply excluded by the force of will. In facing the world with a totally different viewpoint, he maintains alive in the world the presence of a spiritual and intelligent consciousness which is the root of true peace and true unity among men. This consciousness certainly accepts the fact of our empirical and individual existence, but refuses to take this as the basic reality. The basic reality is neither the individual, empirical self nor an abstract and ideal entity which can exist only in reason. The basic reality is being itself, which is one in all concrete existents, which shares itself among them and manifests itself through them. The goal of the contemplative is, on its lowest level, the recognition of this splendor of being and unity — a splendor in which he is one with all that is. But on a higher level still, it is the transcendent ground and source of being, the not-being and the emptiness that is so called because it is absolutely beyond all definition and limitation. This ground and source is not simply an inert and passive emptiness, but for the Christian it is pure act, pure freedom, pure light. The emptiness which is "pure being" is the light of God which, as St. John's Gospel says, "gives light to every man who comes into the world." Specifically, the Gospel sees all being coming forth from the Father, God, in His Word, who is the light of the world. "In Him (the Word) was life, and this life was Light for all men, and the Light shone in darkness and the darkness could not understand it." (John 1: 4-5)

Now very often the ordinary active and ethical preoccupations of Christians make them forget this deeper and more contemplative dimension of the Christian way. So

active, in fact, has been the face presented by Christianity to the Asian world that the hidden contemplative element of Christianity is often not even suspected at all by Asians. But without the deep root of wisdom and contemplation, Christian action would have no meaning and no purpose.

The Christian is then not simply a man of good will, who commits himself to a certain set of beliefs, who has a definite dogmatic conception of the universe, of man, and of man's reason for existing. He is not simply one who follows a moral code of brotherhood and benevolence with strong emphasis on certain rewards and punishments dealt out to the individual. Underlying Christianity is not simply a set of doctrines about God considered as dwelling remotely in heaven, and man struggling on earth, far from heaven, trying to appease a distant God by means of virtuous acts. On the contrary Christians themselves too often fail to realize that the infinite God is dwelling within them, so that He is in them and they are in Him. They remain unaware of the presence of the infinite source of being right in the midst of the world and of men. True Christian wisdom is therefore oriented to the experience of the divine Light which is present in the world, the Light in whom all things are, and which is nevertheless unknown to the world because no mind can see or grasp its infinity. "He was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world did not know Him. He came into His own and His own did not receive Him." (John 1: 10-11)

Contemplative wisdom is then not simply an aesthetic extrapolation of certain intellectual or dogmatic principles, but a living contact with the Infinite Source of all being, a contact not only of minds and hearts, not only of "I and Thou", but a transcendent union of consciousness in which man and God become, according to the expression of St. Paul, "one spirit".

Though this contemplative union is an extreme intensification of conscious awareness, a kind of *total awareness*, it is not properly contained or signified in any parti-

cular vision, but rather in non-vision which attains the totality of meaning beyond all limited conceptions, by the surrender of love. God Himself is not only pure being but also pure love, and to know Him is to become one with Him in love. In this dimension of Christian experience, the Cross of Christ means more than the juridical redemption of man from the guilt of evil-doing. It means the passage from death to life and from nothingness to fullness, or to fullness in nothingness. Thus the contemplative way of ancient Christian monastic tradition is not simply a way of good works and of loving devotion, fine as these are, but also a way of emptiness and transcendence in union with the crucified Christ. The Cross signified that the sacrificial death which is indeed the destruction of the empirical bodily existence and the end of all lust for earthly power and all indulgence of passion, is in fact the liberation of those who have renounced this exterior self in order to dedicate their lives to love and to truth. Christ is not simply an object of love and contemplation whom the Christian considers with devout attention: He is also "the way, the truth and the life" so that for the Christian to be "on the way" is to be "in Christ" and to seek truth is to walk in the light of Christ. "For me to live," says St. Paul, "is Christ. I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me."

This is a summary outline of the meaning of Christian contemplation, a meaning which calls for much greater development particularly in all that concerns the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. Such is the way of contemplation.

One need not be a monk to turn this way. It is sufficient to be a child of God, a human person. It is enough that one has in oneself the instinct for truth, the desire of that freedom from limitation and from servitude to external things which St. Paul calls the "servitude of corruption" and which, in fact, holds the whole world of man in bondage by passion, greed, the lust for sensation and for individual survival, as though one could become rich enough, powerful enough and clever enough to cheat death.

Unfortunately, this passion for unreality and for the impossible fills the world today with violence, hatred, and indeed with a kind of insane and cunning fury which threatens our very existence.

Science and technology are indeed admirable in many respects and if they fulfil their promises they can do much for man.

But they can never solve his deepest problems. On the contrary, without wisdom, without the intuition and freedom that enable man to return to the root of his being, science can only precipitate him still further into the centrifugal flight that flings him, in all his compact and uncomprehending isolation, into the darkness of outer space without purpose and without objective.

TRANQUIL STATE

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Vision is a virgin-fruited cloud
Under whose weight the tree of life is bowed,
Ichored with fluent lambency, no bough
Casteth no shadow now ...
Death, a transfigured bird of glory, sings
Of immortality to tired things,
Cleaving the shades of olden night
With sudden wings of light.
Waters with their heavy brooding roll
Become the shining shadow of the soul
Athwart whose rooted solitude the boat
Of stillness is afloat.
Whatever moves yet bears within its speed
High immobility of movement freed
And all that moves not brims with consciousness
Of movement none may guess.
Shape knows itself ensconced behind its shape
Through my new vision, in sweet self-escape.
Becoming is untrammelled into being
Suddenly through my seeing.
Let men believe that I have grown of late
Into an idle and unfruitful state,
That life for me is without flower or fruit,
Death-stricken at the root.
The few, the golden few who know me know
That what is whispered of me is not so,
That I who toil not yet am constant neighbour
To a true life of labour,
Producing, all unwearied, all the time,
Far-reaching consequence of song and rhyme
Which gradually essays to fulfil
Part of the arcane will.
Yes! Lone have been the roadways I have trod
Bringing me face to face with God;
And life, because I have become His guest,
Grows one long day of rest.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE WAY OF LIFE

By JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

This is the last of the series of articles that Joel Goldsmith sent to *The Mountain Path* prior to his regretted demise in June, 1964. It has been our pleasure as well as our privilege to publish them. A good deal of unpublished material still remains, we are told, with his editor and literary executor, Lorraine Sinkler, and it is possible that through her kindness we may still be able to publish new Joel Goldsmith articles, as he himself wished.

From the earliest days of recorded history the world has lived in turmoil. There has never been an era of peace on earth; there has never been an era of good will unto men. Such a thing has not as yet been known in the history of the world.

Throughout all centuries there have been mystics who have introduced into the world a way of life whereby there could be peace on earth and good will among men, and in a limited number of communities there have been brief periods of peace and good will. There have been such periods among the immediate followers of a few mystics, but none of this has ever touched the world at large. At no time has the world known peace or good will, and the question that is causing thought and controversy is this: "Is it possible for the world to be at peace?" Is it possible for there to be good will among men? Is it possible in this age for men and women to find an inner peace, an inner joy, and a way of life that would end the world's turmoil — a way of life that would make it possible to continue as business men, inventors, government men, professional men and women, and still know a freedom from worldly cares?

Of course it is possible. In every age it has been achieved by small groups or communities, so it can be achieved individually. Unless it is achieved individually it can never be attained by the masses, by the world, and therefore peace and good will must begin with an *individual*. Buddhism had to begin with Gautama the Buddha, and by his own experience flow out to his disci-

ples — and out from them to a wider circle. Christianity had to begin with one individual, Christ Jesus, and by his example attract disciples, apostles, followers — and then by their example attract their particular part of the world unto them. Likewise there have been other great mystics who, by their individual example and by their individual demonstration of the principle they taught, were able to draw unto themselves disciples, apostles, and followers.

So it is that you, by your individual example and by your individual demonstration of a way of life, attract unto yourself a few here and a few there, a dozen here and a dozen there. In some cases hundreds are attracted by an individual you. Occasionally there is an individual who draws thousands, and there are a few who draw tens of thousands by their individual experience.

The contemplative life is a way of life that brings to the individual an inner peace, an inner grace, and a goodly measure of freedom from the sins, diseases and anxieties of this world. It brings to the individual considerable freedom from economic cares, and a freedom from concern or fear as to what the next form of government may be. But this way of life, which is so practical and which has proven itself in the lives of many thousands of individuals, cannot be given to the world as a mass teaching. It cannot be given to large numbers of people. It has to be individually presented, individually taught, and individually demonstrated, because only by the degree of your individual demonstration of harmony, and

mind, can we convince this world of the rightness of this way of life.

There are major Christian countries where church attendance is less than twenty per cent. There are major Christian nations on earth where church attendance is less than twelve per cent. Major nations! The reason is this: It does no good to preach that which is not being proven, that which is not being demonstrated. If those who are doing the preaching are not proving principles in their daily lives, how then can others be expected to listen to or grasp that which is being taught? An individual can only teach that which he knows, and this is even more true spiritually than academically. One may know all the words of Truth and be unable to teach it because, without a demonstrable consciousness of spiritual Truth, that which is conveyed is meaningless.

The Infinite Way teaching is a contemplative way of life, and spiritual healing is but one of the "added things" which normally and naturally accompany spiritual consciousness. At one time there were great civilizations in the Orient, where fine examples of art and literature were products of the contemplative way of life. These particular civilizations came forth during the age of the contemplative way of life and, when that way became separated from what might be called the mundane things of life, those countries began to lose the efficacy of their teaching and the efficacy of their art, literature, and science. The reason is this: The contemplative way of life is actually a contact with the Source of life, and in order to understand this you must realize that nothing can transpire in your experience except through an activity of consciousness. What you are not conscious of is not taking place in your life. It may be taking place, but it is not taking place in your life.

If you look out at this world, regardless of which country you observe, you will find it difficult to believe there is a God. There is little evidence of Deity on earth unless you can lift your gaze above what is trans-

piring among men in the human scene. If you judge by what you read or by what you hear, it would be very difficult to believe there is a God functioning on earth — a God who should be caring for, protecting, and harmoniously ordering the affairs of men. But the tremendous surge one is aware of in the world today, the search for solutions to the problems of the world, bears witness to the fact that there IS a God. It is an instinctive feeling, but it is also an acknowledgement that the world has not found God and that God is not functioning in this world.

If God were functioning on earth it would certainly be true that none of these evils would come nigh thy dwelling place, but the history of the world bears witness largely to the evils that are coming nigh thy dwelling place. If God were functioning in this world, certainly it would be true that "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things,"¹ and "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."² But we learn that at least seventy per cent of the world is undernourished, and I have visited localities where a million, or more people in a relatively small area were living on the equivalent of seventeen cents a day. That cannot be abundance in anyone's currency, nor is it the grace of God!

God is, God does care, and God is a presence and a power, so the question that must naturally arise is this: "If it is possible, how can I bring the presence and the power of God into my individual experience?" If we were to judge by the message and the mission of Christ Jesus, we would have to acknowledge that it is God's will for man to know health, because one of the Master's functions was to re-establish the health of mankind. Likewise it must be the will of God for man to have abundance, because the entire teaching of Jesus Christ was a demonstration of supply where there was no evidence of it. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

¹ Matthew, 6: 32.

² Luke, 12: 32.

The entire message and mission of the Master bears out the Truth that health, abundance, forgiveness, and life eternal represent the will of God. Therefore, when an individual or a world is suffering from sin, disease, accident, lack and death, there must inevitably be an absence of God. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."³ ... In thy presence is fullness of joy."⁴ Any absence of harmony in individual or collective experience must represent an absence of God.

Since God is infinite, God must be Omnipresence, All-presence, everywhere present. There is no absence of God and so we are faced with a dilemma, because our very mortal conditions testify to an absence of God. It was here The Infinite Way had its birth in my consciousness with an answer to the problem of how God can be present — and yet harmony, health, safety, security, abundance, and peace be absent. The answer to this dilemma became the foundation of this work, because it was revealed to me that the secret lies in the word *consciousness*.

God IS omnipresent, but without a consciousness of Omnipresence there is no God operating in your life or mine, individually or collectively. In other words there must be a *conscious* awareness of God's presence. God's presence alone will not do it. The Master revealed this when he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."⁵ He might have said, "Truth will make you free," but he knew that was not truth. Truth alone will not make you free. "Ye shall *know* the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Only that which becomes an activity of your consciousness can manifest, express, reveal, and demonstrate itself in your experience. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."⁶ It will not come nigh your dwelling place if you are dwelling in the secret place of the most High — if you are living, moving, and having your being in God-Consciousness, in Truth.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the

mouth of God."⁷ The word of God could proceed out of the mouth of God all over this world but, unless you individually atune yourself to it, it would be of no value to you. The Word of God has been with us since before Abraham was, and the Word of God will be with us unto the end of the world, but we still have war, depression, murder, suicide, rape and arson.

We still have all of these and the Word of God, but they do not operate in the experience of an individual who receives the Word of God within himself, in his inner consciousness. The Word of God is not heard with the ear. It is heard within the individual, and no man can speak it. It must take place within your own consciousness, which is why the Master taught: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."⁸ He knew giving sermons every day would not save the human race, otherwise he would still be here. No, what you hear from the lips of the mystics, and what you read in their writings, are tools to take into your consciousness and live with until the Word Itself expresses Itself within you.

Everyone who was ever born has the capacity to hear the Voice of God, but the capacity lies dormant. Were this not so, everyone on the face of the globe would be living in peace, harmony, joy, wholeness and completeness, because all it takes for wholeness and completeness is to hear the Word of God — the ability to be consciously at one with the Source of your being. You will soon discover that the entire secret of harmonious living is the contemplative way of life, which was given to us by the Master in the fifteenth chapter of John: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as branch, and is withered."⁹

³ Corinthians, 3: 17.

⁴ Psalm, 16: 11.

⁵ John, 8: 32.

⁶ Psalm, 91: 7.

⁷ Matthew, 4: 4.

⁸ John, 16: 7.

⁹ John, 15: 5, 6.

It does not take too much imagination to visualize in your mind's eye a branch which has been cut off from the trunk of a tree. You can almost see it dancing down the street joyously, as if it had a lot to be grateful for! But as you look further, you must say to yourself, "You poor branch. If only you knew it, you are using up an ounce of that life inside of you with every step you are taking, and within a few blocks you will drop. You will wither and die, because you are using up the very life that is in you and there is no renewal of that life. As a separate branch there is nothing feeding you that can keep you alive beyond the time it takes to use up the substance that is in you." Now let us graft that branch back on to the trunk of the tree and let us look down through the trunk into the roots, and then look down through the roots into the very earth and notice how something called food or energy is being drawn into the roots, transmuted, sent up through the trunk, out through the branches — until eventually we have green shoots, blossoms, buds, and finally fruit. Here we see the whole secret of the fifteenth chapter of John, because we now know that the branch in and of itself cannot have fruit. The branch is only the place where the tree hangs the fruit.

If you observe the tree carefully, you will find this to be true: Behind the food or energy that goes into the roots, there must be an invisible Something which draws into the tree from the earth the very qualities which that particular tree requires. It has nothing to do with the qualities which the tree next to it draws forth, but just the qualities which that particular tree draws. In other words there must be an invisible Intelligence operating in and through the tree which draws unto the tree its own. It must be operating in the ground to send forth food into the roots; it must be operating in the roots to transmute it into sap; it must be operating in the trunk to draw the sap up into the trunk and out into the branches, and again be transmuted from sap to leaves, buds, blossoms and fruit. You then begin to perceive the nature of spiritual truth.

There is an invisible Something that fills all space. There is an invisible Something which sends a seed forth into visibility. Imagine for a moment a newly planted seed, and then watch as the seed breaks open, takes root and then comes forth as a shoot. Remember that nothing was happening while the seed was in the palm of your hand. But the moment it was placed in its rightful element, Something commenced to operate in, on, and through that seed and eventually sent it forth into a redwood tree, an orange tree, or a coconut tree. You then have the secret of the activity of God. It is an invisible Something which cannot be defined, analyzed, or explained, and those who seek explanations or definitions are wasting their time in mental acrobatics because it is an impossibility for the mind of man to grasp the nature of this Infinite Invisible. We know only the effects we witness. We never witness the activity of the Invisible except by Its fruits, by Its results, by Its effects.

We now have God as an infinite Invisible, as Omnipresence, as Omnipotence, as Omniscience, as infinite Intelligence and divine Love. That is as far as we can go in knowing Its nature, and we only know Its nature by the effects. Knowing there is this Invisible, knowing Its nature and Its power, and knowing that It is closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet, our next step is: "Ye shall know." What you consciously know is what can take place in your experience. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."¹⁰ Why? Because you demonstrate that which you know. That which you make a part of your consciousness is what you bring forth into expression.

Right here this question arises: "Am I then responsible for the evils and the ills that are, or were, in my life?" You are responsible in one way — ignorance. Through ignorance of this truth you have become an antenna for the world's beliefs. Therefore, if the world says you must catch cold

because of the weather, some of you will catch cold. As each universal human belief flies through the air we, because of our ignorance of Truth, become victims of whatever the universal belief may be. It is for this reason we have been told: "You must know the truth ... *you* must choose this day whom you will serve ... if *you* sow to the flesh you will reap corruption, if *you* sow to the Spirit you will reap life everlasting." The action lies with *you*, and each day you are called upon to make a choice as to whether your life is to be governed by universal belief or by the activity of the infinite, invisible Spirit that is already "closer to you than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."

There are many reasons why the secret of Jesus' teachings has been kept from the world, but the time is past when it can be kept secret any longer. When you read in Scripture: "Before Abraham was, I am."¹¹ ... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.¹² ... Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,"¹³ you are entitled to know what it means and what its application is in your individual life. As an heir of God you are entitled to know the whole and complete Truth of God, which is: "I AM in the midst of thee. I AM with you and I will be with you unto the end of the world." We are now speaking of that Infinite Invisible which we term God — which you may call by any name you like. God IS in the midst of you. It may be that the particular concept of God you have been entertaining is an erroneous concept, but it does not change the fact that God IS in the midst of you.

This Truth has been a secret for centuries: There is only one God. Each church, each religion, each philosophy has believed there is one God — and that only they have found It. Let us make this very clear: No one is ever going to bring the activity of God into his individual experience if he believes there is a Jewish God, a Buddhist God, a Protestant God, a Catholic God or a Vedantist God. You will never understand God or know God until you come to an

actual conscious realization of the truth that there is but one God, and it makes no difference what church you go into or what church you remain out of. There is still one God, and it is within *you*. It is with you if you mount up to heaven, it is with you if you make your bed in hell, and it is with you if you walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Even if you are the woman taken in adultery or the thief on the cross, God is with you and is closer to you than breathing — and will function at the moment of your recognition of It. It was her recognition of the presence of the Christ that brought the woman taken in adultery her forgiveness, and it was the recognition of the presence of God by the thief on the cross that enabled the Master to say to him, "I will take you with me into paradise this very night." In the moment of your recognition of the one God, though your sins were scarlet, you are white as snow.

We come now to the Master's revelation, "Call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."¹⁴ It makes no difference whether you are Jew or Gentile, with or without a religion, with or without a church, you have the same Father that everyone else has! There is but one Father, and you do not have to go to holy mountains or to holy temples to find Him. "The kingdom of God is neither lo here! nor lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."¹⁵ Whatever your state of being may be — purity or sin, wealth or poverty, health or disease — there is still only one Father, one God, and that one invisible, infinite Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Omniscience. And you cannot influence God!

None of the prayers that were ever formed, written, printed, or voiced, will ever move God. All of the prayers uttered throughout the world will not influence God to set the sun back one hour, or to bring it

¹¹ John, 8: 58.

¹² Hebrews, 13: 5.

¹³ Matthew, 28: 20.

¹⁴ Matthew, 23: 9.

¹⁵ Luke, 17: 20, 21.

up an hour sooner, or to establish peace on earth tomorrow. You will discover how impossible it is to influence, move, or affect God in any way, and this is good news. You cannot stop God being God. God is! "I will never leave you nor forsake you. Never! Never! If you mount up to heaven or if you make your bed in hell, I will never leave you." The beauty of the contemplative way of life is this: You do not have to try to influence God. It is enough to receive God's Grace. It is enough to be able to relax and acknowledge, "God is."

I wish with all my heart that everyone on the face of the globe would be inspired to bring about one spiritual healing, because it would change the history of the world. A strange thing happens with spiritual healing. You find that anyone who asks for it responds to it, whether they are white or black, or whether they are Jews, Protestants, Catholics or Vedantists—and without having to go to church and without having to pray or read a certain number of pages in a book. Anyone who desires spiritual healing receives it, and you then begin to perceive that God is no respecter of persons, religions, or churches.

As you follow a contemplative way of life, you will begin to understand why it is inevitable that every sin, whether of omission or commission, brings forth a punishment. It has nothing to do with God, because God is "too pure to behold iniquity." Punishment has to do with the law of cause and effect, karmic law. In other words you set in motion that which comes back to you. If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption; if you sow to the Spirit you reap life everlasting. You do it, not God! God has nothing to do with punishment, so you do not have to fear a God who punishes in this world or the next world. All you have to be concerned about is that you are not setting in motion today some thought or thing that is going to react upon you tomorrow, because while you are living the human life you are setting into motion the law of cause and effect.

When, however, the spirit of God dwells in you, you then lose the capacity to be

good or bad. Those who have been touched by the Spirit of God can never again be either good or bad. They have no capacity of their own. They have no capacity to do or to be, they have only the capacity to show forth God's glory. They are merely instruments now, externalizations of the Invisible that is governing them.

In the contemplative way of life you begin by consciously knowing the Truth; and daily you make a decision. Upon awakening in the morning, before getting out of bed, you set the scene for the entire day: "This day is a messenger of God, and this day brings into my experience God's grace, God's law, God's life, God's presence, and God's power. I choose this day whom I will serve. My heart, my soul, my mind is filled with the conscious realization of the presence of God. I surrender myself unto God. I listen for the still, small Voice — that It may guide, lead and direct." You are then knowing the Truth, you are choosing, and you are sowing to the Spirit. Throughout the day you have brief two minute, three minute, five minute reminders: "This day is a messenger of God, for this day is bringing the presence and the power of God into my experience. This day is revealing God's glory. The heavens declare the glory of God, the earth showeth forth His handiwork. God's grace is being revealed in my experience every moment of every day."

This is the beginning of the contemplative way of life. As you progress, the form of contemplation takes a different direction. Instead of statements, declarations and affirmations, the next step is that of becoming a beholder. You now awaken in the morning and it is almost as if you had stepped an inch in back of yourself, so that you could look over your own shoulder and say: "Throughout this day I will be a beholder of God at work. I will not try to influence God to do something for me. I will merely behold that which God is doing." It might be compared to beholding a sunrise or a sunset. You cannot take any part in bringing them about; you must be detached in order to really watch God's grace at work. In other words you cannot participate in

what is taking place — you can merely behold God's grace in action — not only in your experience of the world.

And so it is that the contemplative life goes from one step to another, one experience to another, until the final stage is reached. In this stage the beholder and that which is beheld become one. There is no longer God and me. As a matter of fact there is no longer a "me". It is that stage revealed by Paul: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."¹⁶ There is a Presence that goes before me to make the crooked places straight. There is a Presence always with me as protection, safety, security, peace, and harmony. In that final step it is revealed that the very I of my being is a confirmation of what the Master taught: "I will never leave me nor forsake me," and that very I at the centre of my being is then revealed to be the I that I AM, the I that will never leave me, the I that goes before me, the I that is the bread, the meat, the wine and the water of life, the very Presence Itself which is the spiritual being I AM.

What the contemplative way of life does is to graft the branch of the tree back on to the trunk, so that the branch is no longer bearing fruit of its own. The branch is no longer having a life of its own because it is no longer a branch — it is a part of a tree. When you look at a tree you do not say, "Oh! you are a branch." You look at a tree and you say, "You are a tree," and that is the final revelation. You then realize that you are the very life that animates your being, the very wisdom, intelligence and love. That is why It is "closer than breathing."

Once you are *consciously* one with God, you are no longer living your own life. Your life is being lived for you, in you, through you, by the Life Itself. The Life is your life, the infinite Life, the immortal Life, the eternal Life. That is why to "know Him aright" is life eternal. You now understand God to be the Invisible which is operating in the ground, in the branch, in the trunk, the Invisible which is operating upon a seed

and making it a tree, the Invisible which is operating upon a seed and bringing forth another human life. And once you know that the invisible Life is your life, that the Invisible is the very Being of you, the presence, the power, the wisdom, the intelligence and the love, you are then consciously one with It and It can fulfil Itself in your experience.

Imagine for a moment what would happen in your experience if you could accept this Truth: "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."¹⁷ Think what that would do in your relationship with others. Think what would happen if you actually acknowledge that you and I are brothers and sisters. Jealousy, envy, malice, lust, greed and fear would disappear. As brothers and sisters what have we to fear? In the spiritual family God is the Father and we are heirs, so we have no need of anything from each other. Think what it would mean if you could fully accept the spiritual principle that there is only one Father, which is the universal Source of your supply, your life, your love, your protection — and that you never again have to look to someone else, except to share as families do. Consider its effect as the world would witness a group here and a group there, actually living in love because of the recognition that there is one Father, one Source.

As we meditate in contemplation of such truths, and find ourselves at-one with our Source, we receive inspiration that manifests itself in our business, our art, or our profession — ideas that our own education or wisdom could not have dreamed of — powers and strength that we ourselves are not capable of. We actually find ourselves the outlet for an infinite Source, which is really the ultimate object of the contemplative way of life. It is life lived not as a separate branch, but as a branch of a tree that is part of the whole and draws its all from the centre of its own being through an invisible, infinite activity of good.

¹⁶ Galatians, 2: 20.

¹⁷ Matthew, 23: 9.

There can be just as many religions on earth as there are to-day and just as many churches, and yet we could all live with peace on earth and good will to men once the acknowledgment is made that there is only one Father, which is your Father and my Father — and that all of this is not to be found in the books or the ceremonies or the rites of the church — but in *you*. It is within you, wherever you may be, whenever you may be, and whatever your present condition may be. We can then worship inside a church or outside a church and, better still, we can even worship in each other's church!

MOTHER'S LAMENT

Translated by PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN from the Tamil of Muruganar.

From all and sundry oft my child had heard
 Of the dear might of Ramana. Much concerned,
 I warned her to have naught with him. But she,
 Brushing aside my fears as fancies, sought
 To grasp and hold, clear, firm within her heart
 His heavenly form. The world laughs now at her,
 For she has tasted maddening bread, glimpsed Truth,
 The poison whose sole antidote is more
 And more of It, till one has eaten all.

For one who knows that all is Brahman there is nothing to meditate upon and no one who meditates.

— MAHANIRVANA TANTRA.

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

By PROF. EKNATH EASWARAN

"Know God, and all fetters will be loosed," declares the Svetasvatara Upanishad. "Ignorance will vanish. Birth, death and rebirth will be no more. Meditate upon Him and transcend physical consciousness. Thus will you reach union with the Lord of the universe. Thus will you become identified with Him who is One without a second. In Him all your desires will find fulfilment."

What are our desires, our real desires? On the surface level of consciousness they seem to be for personal pleasure, personal profit and personal power; but the more we have of them, the more we crave for them, the more frustrated we become. This is because our driving need, in the depths of our consciousness, is not for what is finite but for what is infinite; and the only purpose that can be served by the finite is to make us know experimentally that it can never fulfil our real need, that "whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."

Our real desire, our driving need, is for God, whether we know it or not; and we cannot have perfect peace until we find Him, until we realize Him in the depths of our consciousness. As Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The Sacred Scriptures of ancient India declare that God is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* — Infinite Existence, Infinite Consciousness, Infinite Bliss. It is through my spiritual teacher, that I have come to understand a little of the tremendous significance of this declaration.

"What did you learn today?" asked Granny when I returned home from college in the evening, many years ago.

"Logic," I answered airily, "Syllogism." I rolled the word round on my tongue like a real scholar.

"Show me one," she said with the disarming directness of those who are free from book-learning, or what Sri Ramakrishna calls rice and banana knowledge.

"All men are mortal," I reeled off the stock syllogism. "I am a man. Therefore I am mortal. That is logic."

"But it is not true," smiled Granny, her eyes bright with faith. "We shed our bodies, but we do not die. We are immortal."

"Who told you so?" I asked.

"You don't have to take anybody's word for that. It is of little use. You must realize it for yourself through devotion to God."

That was many years ago. Today I would put the syllogism thus: "All men are immortal. I am a man. Therefore I am immortal."

When you say I am mortal, you are referring not to me but to the house in which I am living at present. My body is, of course, changing, but I am changeless. As long as I identify myself with my body, senses and mind which are changing, I shall be subject to the great change that is called death. If only I can break through this obsessive identification, I shall then know experimentally that I am the Christ within, changeless, eternal. As Sri Ramana Maharshi would say, when we *disidentify* ourselves with what is changing, that which remains is changeless Reality.

There is only one way in which I can succeed in disidentifying myself with what is changing, and that is by being united with the Divine Ground of our existence. Listen to the song of Kabir, a great saint of mediaeval India:

"O Friend, hope for Him whilst you live, know whilst you live, understand whilst you live; for in life deliverance abides.

If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of deliverance in death?

It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him because it has passed from the body;

If He is found now, He is found then;

If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death."

Kabir is driving home into our hearts that when we realize God in the depths of our consciousness we pass, here and now, from death to immortality. This is neither metaphorical nor metaphysical language, but a calm, clear statement of what happens to us in the tremendous experience called Samadhi (or Self-realization) when we realize God as *Sat* or Infinite Existence. "Seeing Him alone, one transcends death, there is no other way," says the Svetasvatara Upanishad.

"How can we see Him? What are the conditions we must fulfil to see Him in the depths of our consciousness?" Jesus answers the question in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

As long as we have the slightest taint of selfish craving in us, we cannot realize the Self. The Buddha calls this selfish craving by the expressive name of *tanha* or thirst and traces all human suffering to it.

"The thirst of a thoughtless man grows like a creeper; he runs from life to life like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest. Whomsoever this fierce poisonous thirst overcomes in this world, his sufferings increase like the abounding Birana grass.

"But for him who overcomes this fierce thirst, difficult to be conquered in this world, sufferings fall off like water drops from a lotus leaf."

The overcoming of this fierce thirst, the purification of the human heart, cannot be brought about through the senses or the intellect. These are no doubt very useful instruments in dealing with finite objects of the phenomenal world, but they can be of very little use in bringing about the transformation of character, conduct and cons-

ciousness so that we may become pure in heart. "All that the imagination can imagine and the reason conceive and understand," points out St. John of the Cross, "cannot be a proximate means of union with God."

For this we need a higher mode of knowing, developed through meditation, which will enable us to dive deep below the surface level of consciousness so that we can transform selfish craving into selflessness, ill-will into goodwill, hatred into love. It is impossible to do this as long as our senses are rebellious, as long as our mind is restless. "When all the senses are stilled, when the mind is at rest, when the intellect wavers not, then, say the wise, is reached the highest state." — Katha Upanishad.

In other words, when we still our senses, when we still our mind, we pass then and there into a higher state of consciousness in which we are no longer separate fragments but are at one with all creation: "The rout and destruction of the passions, while it is good, is not the ultimate good; the discovery of Wisdom is the surpassing good. When this is found, all the people will sing," says Philo.

This rout and destruction of the passions, as Philo calls it, this extinction of all selfish craving, as the Buddha terms it, is the travail of labour for a man to be born again of the Spirit. As Jesus reveals to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Meditation may rightfully be described as the most dynamic, most creative, most significant function of which man is capable because it can lead him, by bringing about the death of all that is selfish in him, to the selfless state of Christ-Consciousness, called *Chit* by the Hindu sages.

God is *Ananda* or Infinite Bliss, and He has made us in His image for infinite bliss. How then can we ever be content with the fleeting satisfactions brought by money, or pleasure, or power, or fame? As I understand it, these have served their purpose when they have helped us to know experimentally that nothing fleeting or finite can

ever satisfy our driving, deepest need. As Ruysbroeck puts it with deep insight, "Knowledge of ourselves teaches us whence we come, where we are and whither we are going. We come from God and we are in exile; and it is because our potency of affection tends towards God that we are aware of this state of exile."

When we become aware of this state of exile, we long more and more, day by day, for God who is our home. It is this intense longing for the Lord of Love that leads to the integration of our character, to the unification of our consciousness, to the complete purification of our heart. "The Self is not to be known through study of the Scriptures, nor through the subtlety of the intellect, nor through much learning. But by him who longs for him is he known. Verily unto him does the Self reveal his true being." — Katha Upanishad.

We do not long for him intensely because of our selfish attachment to the passing pleasures of the world. Our modern civilization is essentially a sensate one, in which we are being conditioned, by the vast network of mass communication media around us, to believe that we get more and more satisfaction out of life as our senses are stimulated more and more. For a person who is enmeshed by the senses, it is impossible to suspect that he is being drawn by them towards increasing frustration disguised skillfully as increasing fulfilment. He is a prisoner who is clinging to the bars of his prison. As the Bhagavad Gita warns us,

"Thinking about sense-objects
Will attach you to sense-objects;
Grow attached, and you become
addicted;
Thwart your addiction, it turns to
anger;
Be angry, and you confuse your mind;
Confuse your mind, you forget the
lesson of experience;
Forget experience, you lose discrimi-
nation;
Lose discrimination, and you miss
Life's only purpose."

This raging thirst for sensory satisfaction, for selfish satisfaction, is rooted in the age-old, race-old fallacy that I am the body, senses and mind. This primaeval ignorance can be dispelled only by loving God with "all our heart and all our soul, and with all our strength and with all our mind."

"How do we come to love God?" some of my Western friends ask: "It is much easier said than done." We can do so through the practice of meditation on divine attributes using appropriate passages from the Scriptures and the repetition of the Holy Name.

With our gradual progress in meditation we begin to develop the freedom to withdraw our desires from channels which can lead only to increasing frustration, and to re-direct them to the Supreme Goal, which can lead us only to increasing fulfilment. And Jesus said unto them: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

During the first half of our pilgrimage towards the Supreme Goal of life, we have to sail under our own steam; but during the latter half we feel the irresistible pull from the Lord of Love and begin to realize that it is through His infinite grace that we are able to move closer and closer towards the One Light that gives light to all. "Thus spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'"

To conclude with the perfect words of St. Anselm, "Lord, teach me to seek Thee and reveal Thyself to me when I seek Thee. For I cannot seek Thee except Thou teach me, nor find Thee except Thou reveal Thyself. Let me seek Thee in longing, let me long for Thee in seeking; let me find Thee in love and love Thee in finding."

May we seek Him in longing; may we long for Him in seeking; may we find Him in love; and love Him in finding.

"BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT"

—ST. MATTHEW, V, 48.

By SAGITTARIUS

One of the hidden pearls I alluded to in my article of April, 1964, one of those sayings of Christ's which modern Christians ignore, is his injunction to his followers to be perfect as God is perfect. But it is worse than that; they do not merely ignore it but deny its possibility, thereby revealing a presumptuous disagreement with the Master they claim to follow.

There is no more fundamental injunction in the whole Bible than this, for it is the injunction to realize the Supreme Identity. For how can you be perfect without being One with the Father? Christ himself said that only God is good (St. Mark, X, 18). Furthermore he reminded his Jewish critics of the saying in their own scriptures: "I said: 'You are gods'". He referred to men as 'sons of God' and bade them address God as 'Father'; and St. Paul also told them that they were all sons of God in Christ. If, then, a man is the son of God and can be called a God and (as Christ also said) contains the kingdom of heaven within him, what is this but the Supreme Identity?

This injunction marks Christianity as a complete religion envisaging and striving after the Supreme Goal of Identity or Self-Realization, referred to in Hinduism as Moksha, in Buddhism as Nirvana, in Sufism as Fana. By denying its possibility, Christ's purblind followers have degraded their religion, which they still honour with his name, to the lower level of one that envisages only the proximate goal of a purified individuality in a formal paradise. A high goal, no doubt, but not the highest, not the perfection Christ enjoined, not real goodness, for "only God is good".

So resourceful is the human mind, however, that the blinkered theologians who have thus rejected Christ's command and

restricted his religion have managed to turn the tables and make out the inferiority thus accepted to be superiority. They admit the truth of Christ's saying 'I and my Father are One' but limit it to him alone, so that if they have only one Perfect Man, other religions have none at all.

This belief is on a painfully low level of intelligence. Divine laws are universal. Even physically this is obvious, so how much more spiritually! The true doctrine of Identity is simple and yet at the same time intellectually satisfying. Being is One; therefore you cannot be other because there is no other; therefore if you realize your true Self you realize your identity with the One, the Father, and are perfect, as He is perfect. Only the imperfections of your apparent individual nature make you appear other; therefore if you remove them and become perfect, as the One is perfect, you realize your pre-existent Identity with the One. In place of this they put a myth to be taken on faith: that some perfect but not infinite or universal Being (how can he be infinite or universal if he excludes others?) creates a lot of separate imperfect beings and among them one perfect one. Apart from that, he makes it a rule that none of them can become perfect, although this one who is tells them to. No wonder they have to ignore or reject Christ's sayings if they want to foist so crude a doctrine on people.

This impossibility of obeying Christ's injunction to be perfect has become an article of faith with many who call themselves Christians. One of them once asked Swami Ramdas whether it is possible for a man to be perfect and without sin, and when the Swami cheerfully answered, 'Yes', he looked shocked as though he had heard some blasphemy.

Have none of the Christian saints and mystics attained the perfection of conscious Identity? It is clear from the records they have left that some of them have had an intellectual understanding of it, fortified by at least occasional glimpses of Realized Identity. Eckhart certainly came near enough to be excommunicated. "Thou shalt lose thy thy-ness and dissolve in his his-ness; they thine shall be his mine, so utterly one mine that thou in him shalt know eternalwise his is-ness, free from becoming, his nameless nothingness."

The Protestant mystic Jacob Boehme said, as I quoted in my article of Oct. 1964: "God has become that which I am and has made me that which He is." The mystic

Tauler said: "When through all manner of exercises the outer man has been converted into the inward man, then the Godhead nakedly descends into the depths of the pure soul, so that the Spirit becomes one with Him." The modern Christian mystic Joel Goldsmith reiterates it constantly throughout his books.

Now is a time of crass materialism among the masses, both learned and ignorant, and of earnest seeking by the few. It is not too much to hope that some at least of Christ's followers will assume that he really meant what he said and refuse to be hobbled and blinkered any longer by those who claim to speak in his name.

SIMPLICITY

A Note by ALAN CHADWICK*

It seems to me that people make sadhana dreadfully complicated. They seem to believe that the more complicated it is the better. One reads so many unnecessarily complicated modern books and meets so many seekers who come to the Ashram but seem to find the absolutely simple and straightforward teaching of the Maharshi about the One Self too simple to be true. They find its very simplicity confusing!

* For whom see our Ashram Bulletin of Jan. 1964.

Leave objects to look after themselves, if any, and recognise the absence of their subject as an object.

— WEI WU WEI.

THE SILENCE OF THE MIND

By ROBERT LINSSSEN

We publish this article by one of the most eminent Western exponents of Zen not because *The Mountain Path* is concerned with the views of modern psychology as to mental processes or accepts all its findings, but because of the author's conclusion that thought must finally be stilled and that the ego, who is the thinker, resists this process as long as it can, owing to its "instinct for self-preservation". With profound intuition and cogent reasoning, he uses psychology to undermine the conception of a psyche.

In order to know ourselves we must be able to answer a quadruple question: What do we think? Why do we think? How do we think? and finally: Who thinks?

In the West most of us claim to be positive and realistic. In fact we are incoherent in our inner life. As long as we are unaware of the deep motives of our thoughts and of our desires and actions we are incoherent and there is spiritual disorder.

We are well aware, as a matter of fact, that most human beings today are unable to answer the questions why or how we think. Progress made in psychology has made it clear to us how inaccurately we answer even the simplest of all questions: What do we think? We know that the conscious part of ourselves, that which we know with relative clearness, is only a small part of our total self. Beyond this peripheric and superficial consciousness there lie a series of deep layers forming the unconscious. We can consider it a huge recording of the past, full of the scorings of all incomplete actions, incomplete thoughts, incomplete emotions. It is a fact that a complete act, a complete thought, leaves no score on the mind. As Lao Tzu said: "He who walks with Tao leaves no trace."

The Zen 'unconscious' or Krishna-murti's 'unknown' are, on the contrary, absolutely new (to the mind): They are not a result. We can reach the Zen 'unconscious' only by freeing ourselves of the contents of the 'collective unconscious.' It is easy to understand that we can attain full

realization of the Present only by liberating our mind from all identification with the past.

The answer to the questions how and why we think can only be given after having solved this first question of what we think. It is far more complex and goes far beyond the field generally explored by psychoanalysis. In my works I have explained in all detail the operational process of an 'associative habit' which, from the atom to human thought, passing through molecules, cells, amoeba and all other stages, continually works by accumulation, leading to the supreme crystallisation, both psychic and psychological, of the 'me' or 'ego'. Thought is the minifestation of an 'associative habit' on the psychological level.

We associate ourselves with objects: with our bank account, our name, our body, our political, philosophical and religious ideas, with memories of our relationship with different things or of our psycho-physical environment.

The feeling of our continuity and psychological solidity is the result of rapid and complex superimpositions of thoughts. All of them converge towards the same goal: the possibility of experiencing oneself as a distinct and continuous entity. It is in this direction that we must investigate if we wish to be able to answer the double question what and how we think.

Thought may be regarded as an invaluable aid to the ego's instinct for self-preser-

vation. It is the direct result of the above-mentioned 'associative habits'. To believe that we think freely is wrong. We are thought. We do not possess our faculties but are possessed by them. We shall go on being their unconscious slaves as long as we remain unable to answer the fundamental questions here raised.

Symbols, pictures, mental clichés appear unceasingly in our mind, some seeming coherent, others totally incoherent. We sometimes wonder why an absurd idea comes into our mind, but these 'intruders', as some psychologists call them, are not really as distinct from us as we suppose. No thought that comes to us is a complete stranger. Those that we call reasonable and those that seem to us idiotic or queer all come from the same centre. Periodic pulsions bring them up ceaselessly. As soon as one thought comes to our mind another appears. We do not allow the first to come to an end to make way for the second; before the second can end its course a third appears. Why? We *must* think; we must think quickly ... quickly ... quickly.

Why is it that our mind brings up these ceaseless thoughts? There is one evident reason which no modern psychologist has admitted up to now, and which many would probably find it embarrassing to admit. Zen Buddhism and Krishnamurti's thought concur here in perfect agreement in their answer: "Thought must be considered a reflex or autodefence of a fundamental fear." Fear of what? Fear of being nothing, fear of a lack of continuity. Does this mean that if we were able to live one moment of perfect mental silence, perfectly relaxed, we should no longer have the conviction of personal continuity?

Yes! The experience of oneself as a continuous psychologically distinct entity results from the rapidity and complexity of the mental process. We feel consciousness as a continuous duration: from yesterday, through to-day, towards tomorrow. But *this feeling of continuity is illusory.*

There is discontinuity in matter as well as in consciousness. They are expressions

of one and the same completely discontinuous energy. The feeling of continuity of consciousness can be compared to the apparent continuity that the gesture of raising an arm seen on a cinema screen may give. We have the impression of a continuous action but this is in fact the result of a succession of disconnected pictures of the arm, each one a little higher. It is the same with thought. The mental life is not in fact continuous.

Between two thoughts there is an interval of silence. If we were to face up to this the illusory nature of our ego would immediately be revealed to us. If an instant of real silence in our mental activity were located we should immediately become aware of the vanity of the comedy we play to ourselves.

This would be Liberation. What prevents us from achieving it? A force of inertia, very deep, powerful and obscure, opposes it. In some scriptures it is characterised as the 'old man' whom we have to get rid of. In Buddhism it is the fundamental 'tanha', the greed of becoming. It is also personified as Satan, from an old Semitic root meaning 'I resist'. What do I resist? I resist awareness as impersonal Being-Knowledge-Bliss.

From the experimental point of view the problem may be stated as follows: we have to appreciate that mental activity is the expression of a fundamental fear, the fear of being nothing, fear of lack of continuity as a separate entity. In a word, we have to feel and understand that thought is the outcome of our greed to become something, of our thirst for personal duration.

This is not mere theory. When this desire for continuity and ego-duration is seen for what it is, the endless flow of thoughts ceases and mental silence becomes a reality. The ego is then seen to be an illusion. The past is washed away by a fathomless presence that our language cannot express. At this level words like 'Being', 'Love', 'Plenitude of Consciousness' (Satchitananda) might be used; too often, however, words are ill understood and become treacherous or lead to treason.

Some have asked who it is that sees in this state. One can say immediately that it is not the ego. It is 'Satchitananda'. It cannot be the ego because he is the prisoner of his conditioning. The 'me' which is conditioned cannot free the 'me'. When I spoke of the need to feel and understand, I referred to a state of complete perception in which there is no approval, no judgment, no choice, no memory, in fact nothing which is personal. Only pure impersonal awareness of the Real remains. As Chuang Tzu said: we have to be like a perfect mirror. "The perfect mirror sees everything but does not

accumulate or choose" Such is pure perception.

The important thing is to make a practical study of the process of thinking. It is not enough to read books on psychology because they generally deal only with the outermost aspects of the problem. Knowledge of Self is a constant awareness. There is no lasting happiness so long as the illusion of an ego remains with its identifications and its violence. Going beyond oneself is not a failure but Victory. The ancient Chinese Sages called it 'going home'.

NOTICE

Subscribers are requested to renew their subscriptions for 1966 at an early date. Their attention is invited to the circular enclosed herewith.

We sometimes receive complaints of non-receipt of copies of the journal rather very late. We send copies to our subscribers as soon as the journals are ready in the first week of January, April, July and October to the addresses registered with us and non-receipt may be due to our not being notified of change of address in time. Notifications should reach us at least one week ahead of the beginning of the months of despatch. Complaints of non-receipt of copies will not be entertained by us if made after the month of issue by subscribers in India or after three months in case of oversea subscribers.

V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.

SPONTANEOUS AWAKENING

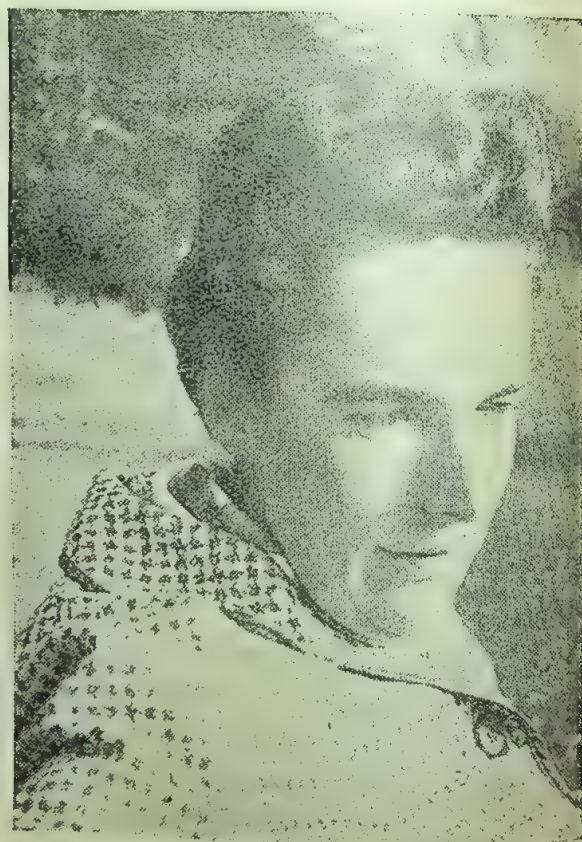
By DOUGLAS E. HARDING

Readers of *The Mountain Path* already know D. E. Harding from his article, 'Self-Enquiry, Some Objections Answered', in our issue of April, 1964. In the present article he tells a story showing how "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth," independent of forms and traditions.

This is the first article to be published about a very remarkable (yet outwardly very unremarkable) young Englishwoman. It is a brief description of how her life has, almost without warning and practically overnight, been altogether revolutionised, written by a friend who has throughout been her close companion and sole confidant. Its purpose is to encourage all serious spiritual seekers, and particularly those who imagine that true illumination is necessarily a long way off, or almost impossibly difficult, or the preserve of some particular sect or religion, or indeed the product of any religious discipline at all. The case of Helen Day Scrutton shows that you never can tell. It brings home to us, afresh, in our own time and circumstances, the tremendous reality of what Masefield calls the "glory of the lighted soul", demonstrating in the most concrete and vivid way the joy and splendour that await us all just around the corner of our life: no, press right in upon us here and now, as we read these words. We can't be too often reminded, not only of the existence of our Infinite Treasure, but also of its perfect accessibility and naturalness, its homeliness and handiness and immense practicality, and above all its aliveness. To remain satisfied with anything less than This just doesn't make sense.

It was about four years ago when I first met Helen. Since then we've worked very closely together all the while in the same organisation, seeing a great deal of each other during the day, and increasingly when off duty. I should know her fairly well.

Let me try to describe the first impression she made. (If this sounds like an employer's



Helen

testimonial, why that's what it is, after all — but with what a difference!) I saw Helen as a lively, healthy-minded and healthy-bodied, very intelligent but not at all intellectual woman in her late twenties. In repose, her face was on the stolid side, with splendid eyes, but what brightness when she smiled! She proved quick to learn all the complex details of her job, practical and level-headed, conscientious after her own independent fashion, humorous, tactful and easy with people as a rule, and unusually patient and self-controlled when things went wrong. In short, a Trea-

sure! No nonsense about Helen — not even powder or lipstick (that I've detected, anyway) — athletic, clear-complexioned, scrupulously turned out, good-looking in an unobtrusive way, not pretty. The ideal confidential secretary and a charming friend.

But I still felt obliged, in the end, to take Helen to task. It seemed to me that she didn't know her own value. Her job, though a responsible one, could lead nowhere, and she was clearly capable of something much more creative. Her interests — tennis, swimming, fairly wide but desultory reading (which included few religious books and certainly no mystical ones), listening to music of all kinds, some youth-club work (neglected in recent years), regular but unenthusiastic Church-of-England attendance, and the sort of superficial friendships such a cheerful and popular young person would naturally make — these seemed not to reflect her true character and potentialities. I had the cheek to tell her so, rather often. She offered no comment. But she did, eventually, make serious plans to train as a probation officer. And a wonderful one she would have made.

We were fond of each other, without seeming to make any deep contact. Inevitably she got to know about my concern with spiritual matters, but no pressure at all was exerted: I had no desire to steer her in that or any other direction. And certainly she seemed a most unlikely subject — altogether too normal and down-to-earth, not a spiritual type at all! (In a certain sense, I still think she isn't, thank God!) Besides (and how unlike so many of us, how spiritually unfashionable, almost reprehensible!) Helen solemnly assured me that she'd loved and been loved by her admirable parents, led a happy childhood, enjoyed her grammar school (she must have been a fine head prefect), and found her office work pleasant enough. Her most testing experience was the loss of her fiancé; and in fact death, or some other insuperable obstacle, has intervened to break no fewer than three engagements. (The significance of this seeming tragedy isn't lost on her, of course, and

she is now more than happy to remain single and quite unattached to any man.) No, Helen is altogether too well-balanced a young woman, lacking almost all the current credentials — no tangled complexes, no awful history of suffering, no prolonged and bitter struggle — to be what in fact she is, a most gifted mystic. (I suspect, really, that the best masters of the spiritual life were, like Ramana Maharshi, specially sane and healthy, the reverse of abnormal). Yet when she typed for me some article about mystical religion she scarcely seemed interested, and had less than usual to say. It's true that when she came to our house for an evening, or to stay for a day or two, she got into the habit of picking up one of my books on Vedanta or Sufism or Zen and reading it; and I noticed that she always finished what she'd started, however difficult or dull the author. She also read my own little book *On Having No Head* — but made nothing of it, I now learn. At the time, she was too polite to say so.

This brings me to the real beginning of the story — to May, 1964, and what we sometimes call the 'Ten Days that Shook the World'. Helen was off to Eastbourne for the Whitsun holiday, and anxious to take some of my books with her; I remember these included Aldous Huxley's *Perennial Philosophy*. Evidently she had become really interested. Something was happening.

A new Helen came back, deeply stirred and now eager to talk. "Douglas," she said (and I think I can quote almost the exact words: after all, it was only a few months ago), "I've just realised something: all this applies to me! And of course absolutely nothing else matters!" She explained how the whole thing had, after a few weeks of inward search, accompanied by increasing concern and tension, become perfectly clear to her: now it made sense, she'd taken it in, taken it to heart, and this was quite overwhelming. Those evenings that followed, when she walked alone for hours in the park, wearing dark glasses so that people shouldn't see that she was crying for joy at

the wonder of her discovery, the transformed world, the colours that positively sang, the exquisite beauty of everything (yes everything, including the 'rubbish' in those wire baskets)! Morning after morning in the office, I was to hear from Helen this kind of story. Often — indeed, usually — it was: "No sleep at all last night, Douglas: time just flashed by: again it was just joy, oneness, clarity, from the time I lay down to when I got up for breakfast, fresher than if I'd slept the whole night. The extraordinary thing is I never feel tired." I remember her explaining how she left home, and presently found herself at the office half a mile away, and the interval was just brightness, no-thinking, with no recollection of having walked at all. I remember also her trying to explain how, on other occasions, her walking was "just like taking the dog for a walk" — her legs and their movement had been like the dog's, nothing to do with her. It was a wonderfully free-and-easy feeling. Yes, Indeed!

Many other surprises were in store for us. Helen's tennis, always goodish, immediately became quite remarkably good, to the astonishment of the members of her club — and their greater astonishment and disappointment when she announced that she wasn't going to play any more, after completing the games that had already been fixed for her. Those games she won brilliantly, automatically. To me, her explanation was that she did nothing, her racquet did it all, the game played itself with a skill and ease she'd never known. Part of the secret (we agreed) must have been that whereas before she had always wanted very much to win, now she had no feelings at all one way or the other, and the resulting relaxation naturally helped her performance. But she insisted that she didn't do anything: again, she was the onlooker. (And, lest anyone should suppose she'd been reading Herrigel's book on Zen archery, I happen to know she still hasn't done so.)

All ambition, all other interests, had gone. The probation-officer project was dropped at once. In fact, Helen even discussed with

me the possibility of getting a routine job, such as a copy-typist's, which would interfere as little as possible with her new life. This idea, however, was soon scrapped because she found that her work, however complicated, practically did itself if she didn't interfere. More remarkably, it did itself (I noticed) even more accurately and rapidly than before. (It *had* to: we spent so much time in the office on other business, on our real business!) "Just let things happen," she said, "and they turn out perfectly. Do them deliberately, plan ahead, and they go wrong." Before, she'd generally been rather pressed for time: now, she had all the time in the world.

I'm sure everyone in the office noticed the change in her. One man who (somewhat unreasonably, I thought) she hadn't much liked, was now "quite nice really, and it was all Helen's fault." It was plain how happy she was. People asked what had come over her: she looked like a cat that had just had kittens, someone remarked. Not that she was changed beyond recognition: thank goodness the old, charmingly informal Helen, with most of her personal quirks, was still with us. There was nothing odd or unnatural or spectacular about the change in her: if anything, she was more truly normal and natural than ever. (So much so that some who don't know Helen very well, but have preconceived notions of the outward effects of Illumination, naturally doubt whether anything more than a psychological reorganisation, akin to those religious conversions which are common enough, has occurred in her. And, of course, one cannot find 'in Helen, or in any other, what one hasn't begun to find in oneself.) Her ego had never stuck out very far; now, it was imperceptible — except, perhaps, for occasional irritation with some particularly difficult client, or employer! "No, it comes back occasionally," she confessed to me, "but now I see clearly when it's there." (Lately, I think even this rare and trivial ego-symptom has disappeared, though she remains capable — we've just discovered — of momentary anger.) Obviously she no longer had moods, but was permanently

happy whatever happened. And she had no need to tell me about her changed feeling for people. Her heart really went out to them; she enjoyed and loved them, not equally (it's true) but far more than she'd ever done before. How many times she's walked into my office exclaiming: "What a wonderful person so-and-so is, Douglas!" — and her glowing face and shining eyes were eloquent of her feeling. At the same time she no longer saw us through the distorting spectacles of self-interest, but as we really were: and in some instances this shocked her. Unsuspected weaknesses and meannesses were now quite plain. Hidden motives showed themselves. She was no longer deceived.

And Helen had no time for the old social round, no time for idle chatter or hobbies or amusements — no time at all except for the one thing that mattered, and all her time for that alone! She somehow got out of those (always rather pointless) little lunch parties, all reading (including newspapers) except for books on the subject, her tennis of course, and even her swimming in the end.

It was the swimming that warned us that her tremendous spirit might be asking too much of her body. One evening in late July I drove Helen to her beach-hut, and as we parted something made me beg her to be very careful. She wasn't. Next morning at the office she told me how rough the sea had been, and how she'd got out beyond the breakers only to become mixed up with a large stinging jellyfish, and then (to cap it all) realised the strength of the current pulling away from the shore. She remained perfectly calm and content (these are roughly her own words) and just waited to see what would happen. Without any effort on her part, her body somehow took her shorewards, where a large wave just picked her up and deposited her quite gently on the beach. There she was surprised to find herself trembling and exhausted.

Helen had become much too careless of her health. She walked and walked goodness knows how far, though always with that

unhurried, loose-limbed, easy gait of hers, which is almost like the lope of some animal. She ate too little and irregularly, and rapidly lost weight. Night followed night without sleep — her new-found happiness was so great. (When, however, she did at last sleep it was, from then right up to now, always dreamlessly. This surprised her, because she had been used to dreaming a lot. It interested me, too, because, unlike her, I knew that one of the marks of the illumined is that they dream little or not at all.) After a few weeks of living like this, no wonder she went down with an attack of her old complaint of anaemia, and had to take it easy — physically. Spiritually, things continued to get better and better, though she couldn't understand how that was possible! If she then read and talked much less, this wasn't because she was tired, but so spiritually fresh that talking and reading books about It had become rather pointless. She was their Author; she was It.

The weeks following Helen's return from Eastbourne had been a time of ecstasy. Let me quote her own words, typical of that period, hastily scribbled on a scrap of paper without regard for grammar or punctuation, and only just rescued from destruction by me:

Light dazzling pure light clear brilliance
A feeling of being carried away weightless

11.00 — 5.30 time non-existent endless eternity

No physical tiredness sleep out of question feeling of exhilaration and peace. Happening for the first time like fog or a curtain dropped completely away

This is all that matters for always
There must be a heaven on earth
Why explain? Words are useless and unnecessary but the knowing constant.

(26th May, 1964)

I did suggest, at the time, that this phase of Helen's illumination (we called it the 'gorgeous technicolour' phase) would develop into an even profounder, more natural,

and virtually permanent state. And this soon happened, in fact. Is it possible for me to describe that state?

Perhaps it would be useful to summarise here by mentioning the four aspects—or moments, or stages—into which we have often divided (artificially, for the sake of description) the essential experience:

1. The VOID. This is the KEY, the indispensable basis. It means clearly *seeing*, at will, even all the time, that right here one is totally headless, bodiless, mindless, and in fact Nothing whatever.
2. LOVE. The result of this absolute contraction is an equal and opposite expansion, a great outward surge which leaves nobody and nothing out.
3. The ALONE. As thus all-embracing, one is the One, quite solitary, free, independent. These foolish words can give no idea of the Home-coming.
4. MYSTERY. Thus actually to be the Alone, Self-originating and Self-sufficient, is unspeakable wonder.

These four may give some slight clue to an Experience which is, of course, neither Helen's nor mine, but that of the One who is our Self; but really they won't do at all—they only import complications into what is perfect Clarity and Simplicity. Between this Clear Seeing, and the finest description of it, there must always remain an infinite gap. It isn't merely that words can't reveal It: they're what hide It.

Of course a certain amount of talk helped at the beginning. Just being with Helen, ready with encouragement and understanding when she needed them, and the occasional explanation of some puzzle, did make a good deal of difference. And I was able to put her on to those few—but very few—books which have been written out of first-hand experience, and protect her temporarily from the thousands that have not. I introduced her to Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, Rumi, the

Upnishads, Sankara, Ramana Maharshi, Lao-tzu, Huang-po and Hui-hai: notice I was careful not to plug any one tradition: it was imperative that Helen should find her own affinities. In fact, she was unable to pick and choose between them: each displayed for her an indispensable aspect of a single clear pattern. (Only, perhaps I should add, Ramana Maharshi has a very special appeal for us both.) Helen devoured these books, ignoring always the merely geographical and historical accidents and grasping the common essence. She had no real questions to ask me then, none at all.

A miracle it remains for us both, how suddenly and completely this wonderful thing has happened. But even miracles have some background, and obviously this one called for further investigation. How was it possible for Helen so rudely to jump the spiritual queue? We thought of the years of anxious searching, of austerities, marathons of meditation, which are traditionally reckoned the price of any real Illumination, and we marvelled. Was Helen one of those very rare exceptions to the rule? Then we discovered—not, of course, an explanation of her gift and her grace, but something of its history. She'd been a dark horse all along. Understandably, there'd been, throughout childhood and youth the flashes, the brief but lovely previews of heaven; but in addition something much more remarkable and significant. From her earliest schooldays onwards, she'd been in the habit of going off on her own, swimming, rambling, just sitting; and this solitude became more and more an essential part of her life-pattern. Latterly, her beach-hut had provided a convenient retreat where she used to sit, quite alone for hours, on summer evenings and at weekends. I asked what she had thought about. She replied—bless her!—just as if it were a stupid question to have asked: "Why, nothing! I just sat!" "Dozing?" I enquired. "Of course not. Quite wide awake, with an empty mind." Just like that! It's true the fact that there was something odd about this behaviour had already dawned upon her: her friends were inclined to regard it as self-indulgent, or

even morbid. Not that this had at all deterred Helen: the pleasure of merely sitting there was its own reward, and increasingly necessary to her well-being. But certainly it never occurred to her that this state of no-mind might have some religious or mystical significance, or was much more than an idiosyncrasy. If anyone had told her then — as I did later — that after months and years of sitting meditation a yogin would be doing well if he could avoid *all* wandering thoughts for a few minutes, whereas Helen was able to shed them for as long as she liked — why, if anyone had told her this she would have thought he was just teasing! I don't mean to imply, of course, that this strange accomplishment of hers was 'sitting meditation' in the full sense of that term, or spiritually mature: it was, as yet, far from Self-aware. But what better rehearsal for the Self-awareness she now enjoys could be imagined?

Well, that is Helen's story to date, in brief. It will be pointed out, of course, that having got off to a wonderful start, she still has a long, long way to go. In one sense, it's true: there's no end to This. But in a much deeper sense it's *the* lie. She has nowhere to go. She's where she has always been — HERE. What's more to the point, she has the nerve to see it, and to say she sees it, and to live every moment accordingly. That's all that matters.

For all genuine seekers, and particularly for us in the West, Helen should prove a huge encouragement. She doesn't want to be known — or unknown, for that matter — and is virtually indifferent to praise or ridicule.

But she agrees that others should take heart from her story — from this account of what can happen to a quite 'ordinary' person (in fact, of course, none of us — and certainly not Helen — is quite ordinary), and has happened so recently right here, under our noses, where almost everyone interested in these things suffers from a chronic spiritual inferiority complex. We all know the sort of thing: "It can't be done here. You have to go off to some cave in the Himalayas, or some Japanese monastery, and there you have to spend months just learning how to sit and breathe properly, and then you have to sit in meditation for perhaps the rest of your life, under the guidance of the right Master (and how difficult he is to find) before you can hope for Enlightenment. Even then the chances are you'll miss it. Well, at least you'll get off to a flying start in your next life, or the next but one...."

Helen is splendidly *confident*. Only once, right at the start, has she entertained the slightest doubts regarding her illumination, and then they passed very quickly. (Comparing the immense efforts of certain Zen monks to gain some glimpse of their Original Face, with her own apparently effortless and clear seeing of It, she didn't know what to think — understandably enough.) Her confidence doesn't arise from what she understands, but from What she sees — and anything, anything can be doubted except This.

How many more Helens there are I don't know. Even if there's only one who, reading her story, finds the courage to follow her over the brink of the precipice she will bless Helen, infinitely.

THE INNER SHRINE

By SACHAL, Sufi poet-saint of Sindh.

We have seen the Kaaba in the heart, so what need is there to go to Mecca? My mind is the mosque, so why worship in an outer shrine? In every artery is He, so why pronounce the creed?

SUFFERING

By DEREK SOUTHALL

(Provoked by news of the Congo massacres)

KOAN

How can one laugh at Lear or sense
God's mercy in malevolence.

Doubt arose, yawned, stretched, fed and
grew

Until a torrent, ruthless, sped
To overwhelm the throbbing head.
Most strange because a while before
Rapture embraced the world in awe,
Such wonder, truth and reverence.

Delight, elated, mortal, soared
To passion's bourn and echoed back
Transformed into a humour black.
Now a sad, sour, desperate mood,
A bent, uncomfortable brood
Of indecision, greed and hate.

Well fed and warm I heard the news,
That sobered, sickened, took the breath,
Of mutilation unto death.
The hatchet cleaves the living flesh,
And all are tangled in the mesh
To bear the torment of mankind.

I could not repudiate guilt,
Responsibility or crime,
For that we all commit in time.
Violence, shrouded, septic, deep,
Lurking, simmering, half-asleep;
Man's legacy, to be unleashed.

Or was an answer to be found
Anchored deep within the pool
Of me: secret, quiet, cool?

Yearning to be completely free
I then resolved simply to see
What reality was for me.

Content within life's flowing stream
To experience not just to dream.

Suddenly from view to vision
The pain had passed and sanity
Saw sorrow and humanity
Reconciled yet not affected,
By understanding protected:
Faith had joined doubt in harmony.

Stronger still my attention held,
Until from patterns in a dance,
A fragment of significance
Rose, lucid into brilliance.
Reality knows no substance
No separation, only change,

Yet separation is the sole
Spinner of self and suffering.
Rejoice therefore in furthering
The view, that in a concept tied,
With pain and self identified
Is man, true focus of the All.

Awareness properly centered
By mystic alchemy knows vain
Self to be the glory and pain
Of universal cells and stars
Bound not at all by ego's bars
Serene, intangible and free.

Self assimilation helps to raise
A melody from man's malaise.

HOW LOVE DEFIED LAW IN RAMANUJA

By T. KRISHNAJI

The great Acharya Ramanuja was as indifferent to formal orthodoxy in his day as Sri Ramana Maharshi was in ours. If the Maharshi extended his upadesa to non-Hindus, Ramanuja did to non-Brahmins. T. Krishnaji tells us the story of it here.

When already famous Ramanuja, the great founder of Visishtadvaita, was initiated by Goshti Purna into a mantra which, the latter declared, was a sure means to salvation and must therefore be carefully guarded and revealed only to those qualified. Ramanuja pledged himself to secrecy, but as soon as he had received the mantra he rushed to the great temple and proclaimed it aloud to all. Goshti Purna was furious at this sacrilege and, summoning him, asked what punishment he expected for breaking a vow made to his guru. Ramanuja replied: "Even if my punishment be hell, I will accept it gladly, since I have given so many others the means to enter heaven." Overcome by this wealth of love, the guru forgave and embraced him.

Even before this Ramanuja had shown impatience of the forms of orthodoxy. He had taken as his guru Kanchi Purna, who was a non-Brahmin, and had invited Kanchi and his wife to come and stay with him in his house. Ramanuja's wife, a strictly orthodox Brahmin, was indignant, as legalistically she had the right to be. Matters came to a head when she and the wife of the guru both went to draw water from the well at the same moment one day. Ramanuja's wife spoke insultingly to the other. Ramanuja was indignant and they had a violent quarrel. After this he sent her off to stay with her parents for a while. The arrangement was that he was to follow her, but instead he gave up the household state and went forth as a sannyasi.

It had been Yamuna (known also as Alavandar), the great bhakti acharya of Srirangam, whom Ramanuja had really wanted as his guru, but out of modesty he had delayed going to him. Yamuna had heard of

Ramanuja and envisaged him not only as a disciple but as his successor. Finally he sent a disciple to fetch him; but Ramanuja arrived at Srirangam just too late, when the master's body was already laid out for cremation. Even so the disciples wanted to elevate Ramanuja to their head; but he felt that he had not yet the necessary maturity. He



served under the above-mentioned Kanchi Purna, who was one of Yamuna's disciples, became a sannyasi, travelled up and down the country, and took initiation under Goshti Purna before eventually becoming Yamuna's successor.

It is said that on arriving at Srirangam Ramanuja noticed that three fingers on the hand of the dead master were clenched. On asking about it he was told that before dying Yamuna had expressed three desires:

that commentaries should be written from the bhakti approach he promulgated to the Brahma Sutra, the Bhagavad Gita and the Vishnu Sāhasranāma. Ramanuja gave a solemn undertaking to write them, and the fingers thereupon straightened out, to the astonishment of all.

It is the Hindu tradition that a teacher wishing to launch a new outlook does not write a philosophy of his own but expresses his views in commentaries on the scriptures so as to show his orthodoxy. It was this that Yamunacharya wished done and that Ramanujacharya undertook and so magnificently accomplished. But not immediately. He was in no hurry but wished first to attain full maturity. Yamunacharya died in 1040. It was about 1049 when Ramanuja donned the ochre robe, as described above. Even after that he spent years in study and travel. He went as far north as Kashmir, where he was given a rare theistic manuscript. He lost it on the way back, but his disciple Kuresa had not merely read it but memorised it, so it could be reconstructed. Throughout India he became known as the champion of theistic, devotional religion.

In order to understand the importance of his work it is necessary to indicate its place in history. The non-Vedic creeds of Jainism and Buddhism had overspread India to a large extent. In the 9th Century A.D. the great Acharya Shankara restored the Upanishadic teaching of Advaita: that Reality is non-dual, ~~that the world of forms is a mere illusion (maya) without substance, seeming to be real owing to avidya (ignorance).~~ It followed from this that ritual and worship were mere accessories, the one essential being Knowledge, Jnana Yoga. A great Hindu revival stemmed from this. It was, however, above the heads of the masses, and therefore religion again began to decline and lose fervour. It was reinvigorated in the South by the lives and songs of the poet-saints known as Alvars and Nayanmars, and a new wave of devotional life arose, in which miracles and acts of Divine Grace played a great part. Yamuna-

charya was one of the great focal points of this movement, and from him the leadership passed on to his still greater successor, Ramanujacharya.

The strict adherents of Advaita spoke of God as Siva; the new devotionalists worshipped Him as Vishnu, thus creating the distinction between Saivites and Vaishnavites that has continued to this day. There was not always a spirit of tolerance between the two. The Chola king (the largest kingdom of South India) had hitherto shown himself tolerant. He summoned Ramanuja to him but the latter's devoted disciple Kuresa, anticipating danger, went first, impersonating his master. The spirited replies he gave when questioned so enraged the king that the latter had him blinded. Ramanuja therefore stayed outside the Chola Kingdom until this king's death in 1118. But all the time the Vaishnavite tide was rising.

Advaita postulates the Reality of Non-Dual Brahman alone, with *achit* and *chit*, body and soul, as illusory phenomena. The dwaitic or dualistic philosophy which Madhva (1197-1271), the third of the great acharyas, was soon to enunciate is frankly pluralistic, treating nature as a distinct and separate reality, though dependent on God. Ramanuja reconciles the Upanishadic statements which identify the individual soul or *atma* with nature or *Paramatma* with those that distinguish it from Brahman. He harmonized these passages by treating the soul and nature (*prakriti*) as distinct but inseparable from God. "All values are ultimately attributable to God alone."

Ramanuja postulated that *chit* (soul), *achit* (matter) and Ishvara (Personal God) are eternal and distinct, but *chit* and *achit* are inseparable from Ishvara. They may be called the 'adjectival appendages' or 'attributes' of Ishvara. All three are real and ultimate substances, but the one really ultimate, Ishvara, has its inseparable modes and attributes both before and in creation. The Brahman is the sole Reality, notwithstanding its attributes of soul and matter.

Ramanuja's philosophy, which later came to be known as Visishtadvaita, is not merely reconciliation of Advaita and Dvaita. Giving equal validity to the *bheda* (other) and *abheda* (no-other) *srutis*, he evolves a new system of his own. He maintains the distinction between God, soul and matter, while asserting that they are not separate. "We often identify distinct things, like a rose and its redness. The rose is a thing and redness its quality and they cannot be the same, yet we speak of them together as 'rose'. This intimate relationship is called *prathak siddhi* or inseparability." Light and heat, a flower and its fragrance, fruit and its flavour, sugar and its sweetness, though inseparable are distinct ideas. In other words, to Ramanuja, "Brahman carries multiplicity within Himself." Most Christian mystics are Visishtadvaitins. W. T. Stace quotes the great Flemish mystic Ruysbroeck to this effect, speaking of God and the soul. "They always remain separate existences. Their union is like that of sunlight and air or heat and red-hot iron. The sunlight completely permeates and interpenetrates the air, yet air remains air and sunlight remains sunlight. Likewise in red-hot iron, the heat interpenetrates the iron, but heat does not become iron nor iron heat."¹

"To Shankara the identity of God, soul and matter is primary and the difference is secondary. To Ramanuja their difference is primary and their identity is secondary." A critic of Ramanuja's philosophy points out that: "the attempt of Ramanuja to preserve the distinct reality of the finite spirits and insentient matter in the Being of Brahman as Its forms of energy are logically defective as to how they remain in Brahman. Even if they remain, then they must have been absorbed into Its Being and must have lost their distinct individuality."² Another critic observes that the problem of immanence and transcendence could not be reconciled in a system where God and Its modes are eternally real and distinct. This does not really matter, however, because Ramanuja's teaching is less a system for philosophers than a foundation for faith and

devotion, and as that it was enormously successful.

The emphasis was shifted from philosophy to worship. Scripturally the system was based largely on the Agamas and Puranas. For Ramanuja "the Divine Spirit is not soulless". God possesses all the auspicious qualities, *ananta kalyāna gunas*, but is free from the reprehensible qualities. He creates and sustains. He is accessible and compassionate. He bestows his grace on his devotees. Devotion as a spiritual path is open to women as well as men and to low castes as well as high. It implies factual or emotional separation from the God one worships in order to permit of *saranāgati* or surrender. Ramanuja's great postulate is the 'Supreme Personality of God'.

Krishna in the Gita assures Moksha to all who surrender themselves to him.³ God is the Saviour and Protector of His devotees. Helpless as we are, our duty lies in *prapatti* and *saranāgati*, absolute submission and surrender to God. Self-surrender is the dedication of oneself and is the climax of all religious endeavour. The Ramayana and Bhagavata refer frequently to *saranāgati*, but Ramanuja raised it to the highest religious duty and gave it importance as a spiritual path open to all. Not only did he uphold the supremacy of Vishnu as God but he maintained that the idol in the Vishnu sanctuary, called 'Archā', is no mere token but is God Himself. Lakshmi, the Divine Spouse of Vishnu, is His Mercy and her love flows out towards all His devotees as she mediates with Him for them and for the bestowal of His Grace. Here again a similarity is seen with Christian devotional worship, where the intercession of the Blessed Virgin is a powerful factor.

Thus Ramanuja bridged the gulf between philosophy and religion. Visishtadvaita maintains that, knowledge being relative, subject and object remain distinct. *Chit* and

¹ The Teachings of the Mystics, p. 130.

² Indian Realism and Modern Challenges, by P. T. Raju, p. 67.

³ Bhagavad Gita, XVIII, 66.

achit are equally real. Whereas Maya veils the Reality according to Advaita, according to Visishtadvaita it is a Shakti co-existent with Brahman and revealing the Lila or play of the Lord. Though the differences between the two schools are emphasised by philosophers, the ultimate purpose of both is the realization of God. The philosophy of Ramanuja has influenced theistic schools and devotional practice all over India.

Ramanuja lived what is considered in Hindu teaching the full span of human life, one hundred and twenty years, and his achievements were many-sided. Stripped of all the legends that have gathered round him, we see him as a great personality with intense devotion to God and deep love for mankind. While his writing shows a keen intellect, he evinced also a practical genius

for religious organisation. And through it all we can see his deep humility. He had numerous disciples, both lay and ascetic, out of whom he chose 74 to continue his work as acharyas. When he foresaw his end he called all his disciples before him and gave them 72 injunctions. Then, with hands folded, he walked round among them saying: "If I have at any time, consciously or unconsciously, offended you in any way I beg you to forgive me before I go away from among you." This was typical of his goodness and humility. He departed this life in 1137. He is immortal and lives enshrined in the heart of every devotee of Vishnu. "He is an instrument of the Divine to spread the religion of devotion and self-surrender to Vishnu, the inner Ruler of all beings, Who gives Himself to those who abandon themselves to Him."

- JOEL. -

**YOU HAVE GONE ON TO RICHER PLAINS
IN NOBLE GARB AND SPLENDID LIGHT
AND NOW YOUR VOICE SEEMS CLEARER STILL
SINCE YOU HAVE LEFT THE DENSER SIGHT.**

**NOW WHEN THE DESERT LOOMS AHEAD
AND ITS SIROCCO STARTS TO BLOW
YOUR SPIRIT SPANS THE ARID WASTE
AND SPEAKS AGAIN, BE STILL AND KNOW."**

**WE LOVED THOSE YEARS YOU TROD OUR WORLD
WITH SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO UNFURL
WE THANK YOU JOEL, FOR YOUR LOVE
YOU TALKED TO SHELLS-REVEALED THE PEARL.**

**SOME DAY WE TOO SHALL ENTER THERE
WHERE LOVE IS ALL, AND ALL IS LIGHT
WHERE ALL CREATION SINGS YOUR SONG
"THERE IS NO NIGHT! THERE IS NO NIGHT!"**

-TERRY SANDERS.-

THE ACCLIMATISATION OF BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

By CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

The eminent author of this article has not so much studied the question of the acclimatisation of Buddhism in the West as lived with it. As Founder-President of the London Buddhist Society, he has had his hand on the rudder of Buddhist development in England for forty years past. His two books, *Buddhism* and *Zen Buddhism*, both of which have become paper-backs and best sellers, have added as much as any to the process that has been going on this century of bringing Buddhism out of the encyclopaedias into the purview of ordinary well read people in the West. Apart from his work for the Buddhist Society, Mr. Humphreys has an exacting professional life and we are grateful to him for taking time off to write this article for us.

Gautama the Buddha gave his message to mankind in India, and 'Buddhism', a Western term for the doctrines and practices built up about that teaching in the last 2,500 years, was also developed in the East. But in the last hundred years or so Buddhism has come West.

It came to Europe in the form in which, two thousand years earlier, it went further East, that is to say, school by school, each school bringing its own observance and form of organisation as the shrine for its essential teaching. In considering the influx of Buddhism into the West — and I am including the U.S.A. in this generic term — we must therefore look to the heart of any school and what I am pleased to call its apparatus. The terms are not synonymous for the one may well be found without the other.

The essential spirit of any school of Buddhism may be gleaned from books, whether its Scriptures or text-books based upon them, and from talks, whether formal lectures or conversation in class or otherwise. The student, whether college youth or retired business man, natural recluse or housewife, may have no inclination to look further. There are many in the West — how many we can never know — who, having acquired an understanding of basic principles which appeal to them, set to work to study them, in theory and practice, buying perhaps an occasional new book or borrowing it from a friend or library. They feel no need to join any society and, save for the

look of their bookshelves, may remain unknown as 'Buddhists' to all but their closest friends.

They may belong to any school or none. Of the schools of Buddhism it is enough here to say that the oldest to survive as such is the Theravada, the Doctrine of the Elders, to be found today in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Cambodia. But the Mahayana, taking this as a general movement, was founded early in the history of Buddhism, and its various schools moved, seriatim, East, along the old trade routes into China, Korea and Japan; North into Tibet and Mongolia, and West into North-west India.

In the same way Buddhism became known the West school by school, first by sporadic translations of isolated scriptures and later by the planned translations of Max Mueller, Rhys Davids and the like who rapidly gave Western scholars a working knowledge of many of their doctrines. But the first organised attempt to make Buddhism known to Western minds as a moral philosophy to be lived, as distinct from being merely 'studied', was that of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, which was founded in London in November 1907 to prepare the way for Ananda Metteyya, an Englishman who had taken the Robe by that name in Burma and wished to 'proclaim the Dhamma' to his fellow-countrymen. His Buddhism was that of the Theravada. Not until twenty years later, when Dr. D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism*

appeared in London did we know anything, save from an occasional article, about the Zen school of China and Japan, and only in the last ten years have we begun to learn anything practical about Tibetan Buddhism.

Each of these schools found their specialists, as scholars and practitioners and books have appeared to tell the West more about each school. Some writers were professional scholars; some just wrote of the teaching as it appealed to them; a few, for whom I have dared to coin the phrase 'schollowers', attempt to study and at the same time apply such principles as we glean from the translations of others, though more and more of us find the means to study the subject at first hand in the country of our predilection.

But 'authority' is a word unknown in Buddhism, and the Buddha himself is quoted in the Pali Canon as saying that we should not believe the words of even the wisest sage unless, when applied, they accorded with all that we had so far found to be true. The value, therefore, of any scripture or famous teacher depends on the student; only he can assess its value to him, at that time, in his then state of development.

In the Theravada stress has been laid in England, in my view wrongly, on the Abhidhamma, the third division of the Pali Canon, with its elaborate systems of meditation most of which are quite unsuited, in my experience, to the Western mind, to the detriment of the dozen basic principles of the Theravada which some think unrivalled as a practical moral philosophy applicable to all men in all places. In the Zen school of Japan initial training, which means training in 'sitting', a combination of mind-awareness and physical posture, is given by a chief monk. Only when the pupil has shown himself able to 'sit' does the Roshi consider him for acceptance, the Roshi being a Zen master who has not only achieved a high degree of enlightenment, but has received the *inka* or seal of his master as being competent to teach. In England there is as yet no resident Roshi, and therefore, so far as I have control of the Zen class of

the Buddhist Society, no organised use of the *koan*, which I consider a most dangerous practice without the constant supervision of a master. All that is done in the Zen Class, therefore, is to learn to control the thinking mind, in meditation and at all times, and to develop the intuition for the first *kensho*, or break-through to awareness of non-duality. Results are encouraging. The rest must wait. The Tibetan school uses ritual more than either of the other two, but as yet there is no Tibetan Vihara where 'services' may be held. Only Lamas, in the sense of monks of rank equivalent to a fully ordained Bhikkhu, may conduct group practices.

This brings one to the Sangha in the West, and its many problems. The Sangha of the Theravada is the oldest religious Order extant, being founded by the Buddha, who himself laid down at least a large proportion of the 227 Rules which today bind the actions of each member. In 1908 the Sangha, in the form of the Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya came West, and the problem of obeying the Rules in London appeared at once. They include, in general terms, the possession of but five objects including the Robes. No money may be handled, and the Bhikkhu may not sleep more than three consecutive nights in the same house as a woman. More private, and therefore a little more easy to observe, the Bhikkhu must sleep on a low bed, have no meal after noon and be at all times celibate. More difficult, and no serious attempt is made to practise them in London, are Rules about dignity of position in public, none sitting higher than the Order, and one which caused acute embarrassment in London in 1908, to the effect that no member of the Order may ride behind a horse. And of course no member may eat save that which is offered to him, and for that he should beg in the village with a begging bowl. Begging in this form in London is a crime.

From these Rules there was, of course, progressive deviation. During the war the Venerable U Thittila of Burma, resident in London, removed his Robes to do voluntary

work of compassion in the 'blitz,' assuming them again to lecture or attend a Buddhist meeting. This raises at once the overall problem; if one of the Rules is modified for Western usage where does the modification stop, and who is to sanction the slightest deviation? In Buddhism there is no Pope to give orders to all Buddhists, and not even a national equivalent. The nearest is the Sangharaja in Thailand, who is backed by statutory authority. Even in Tibet before 1959, the Dalai Lama's authority over other than the Geluppa sect was only that of respect. It is a fact that no-one, and no body of men, can unfrock a Bhikkhu for even the grossest misbehaviour, not even the monastery which gave him the Robe. What, then, is a Bhikkhu in England to do? The answer until recently was to make such variation as he deemed right and proper, but with the creation in 1964 of the Sabha Sangha, a standing Council of members of the Order then resident in London, his problem is solved. He will relax the Rules as agreed by that body and not otherwise.

These relaxations include the possession of books, a typewriter and the like; the handling of money for travel given for the purpose; the wearing of warm underclothing and socks and shoes in addition to his Robes, and less stringent interpretation of sleeping in the same house as a woman, as at the Summer School of the Buddhist Society.

As no begging is allowed, arrangements are made by those who run the building where the Bhikkhu lives—usually a lay committee—for the rent and other expenses to be paid from funds collected by the committee. Of Viharas, residences for Bhikkhus, there have been three in the history of Buddhism in England, but the oldest in Europe is the Buddhistisches Haus at Frohnau, near Berlin, founded by the late Dr. Paul Dahlke. In London, the Anagarika Dharmapala when founding in 1926 a British branch of the Maha Bodhi Society, bought a house near Regent's Park where Bhikkhus stayed from time to time, but this was closed in 1939. The two at present

functioning are that at Chiswick, which used to be in Knightsbridge, and is organised from Ceylon, and the English Sangha, of which the present head is the English Sthavira Sangharakshita, in Hampstead. Both are controlled by the Sangha Sabha above mentioned. The value of the Vihara system is obvious, and more are planned. The respect paid to the Robe by English Buddhists is a middle way between that of the chela to his guru in India and that to a schoolmaster by pupils at an English school. An audience will rise when the Bhikkhu enters for a class or lecture, but off the record the respect paid will accord with his personal stature as a Buddhist teacher.

In the Mahayana Sangha most of these difficulties do not arise, for many of the Theravada Rules have been modified to the point of disappearance. Robes in China and Tibet, for example, are of wool and plentiful; and a 'medicine meal' or light supper is often taken in the evening. Some monks in Japan are even married, whereas the rule of chastity in the Theravada is absolute. Among the Tibetans now coming to the West the need for a Vihara is urgent, for they need a temple or something similar for their services. A Tibetan Vihara will, we understand, be opened in England in the near future. The Japanese have no Buddhist unit in London, and there are as yet no resident Zen monks who need a monastic residence.

In all these three main schools, Theravada, Zen and Tibetan, there is much meditation, both in classes and in private. But the 'apparatus' needed is minimal. At the most a Shrine, cushions on the floor for the increasing number of those learning to sit cross-legged in either the half or full 'lotus posture,' and chairs for the remainder; these are easy to assemble.

The tendency is all for simplification and the reduction of accessories of every kind. The West is concerned with ideas, Buddhist or any other, which prove attractive. History, tradition, 'authority' of any kind, are matters of retreating interest. Even Scriptures are regarded as many merely as

the source of ideas. The emphasis now is on actual experience, which may or may not be referred to as religious or spiritual. Distinctions between the teaching and practice of the various schools are of less and less interest to the 'schollower,' who blandly chooses from the books he reads those principles which seem to him to be basic Buddhism, and help him to satisfy his spiritual needs. There are in the field of scholarship, as in practice, specialists. There will always, I believe, be the pure — his friends might call him the rabid — Theravadin, equating with the Puritan streak in the English character, and there will always be the man of Zen, developing the intuitive,

irrational, merrily mystical, even happily non-sensical factor in our mind. The vast majority of Buddhists, however, are quite unconcerned with the subject of this essay. They read and listen, study and meditate, argue and apply Buddhism as it appeals to them. And their number is increasing rapidly. But what will happen to 'Buddhism' in the process, and what a 'Buddhist' will be in the West in twenty or fifty years I would not like to say. It is enough for some of us that we have striven to 'proclaim the Dhamma' to those 'whose eyes are scarcely covered with dust (of illusion)'; it is for those who have ears to hear to apply it as they will.

Maharshi states in *Who am I?* "Everything offered to others is really an offering to oneself". This very great verity was noted by Brother Giles, one of St. Francis of Assisi's original disciples and co-founders of his Order, when he declared "Everything that a man doth, be it good or evil, he doeth it unto himself".

Pure *bakhti* perhaps, it is also pure *jnana*. But do we even enquire whether this great injunction works as well the other way round?

Should we not also enquire whether everything asked for from others, prayed for to An Other, whatever is Deified, prayed to and lauded, is not also an entirely autonomous performance?

Could it be that being congenitally or by conditioning unable to know what is our Self, unconsciously seek to approach our Self more nearly by objectifying it so that we may address it? Do we not even vicariously and ritually eat our flesh and drink our blood in this desperate attempt to attain to what we are?

— WEI WU WEI.

THE CH'AN SHOUT

By CH'AN MASTER CHI CH'ENG Also called CHIN YIN,

From *The Imperial Selection of Ch'an Sayings*,

Translated by Upasaka Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk).

Ch'an master Chi Ch'eng and three eminent Ch'an masters, Yuan Wu, Fa Chen and Tz'u Shou, were invited to a vegetarian dinner at Governor Ch'en Liang Pi's residence where ten learned Dharma-masters and a thousand monks of the Ch'an sect and of other schools were also present. Emperor Huei Tsung of the Sung dynasty (1101-26) availed himself of the occasion to come incognito to listen to their discussions.

There was among the guests a Dharma-master who was well-versed in the Hua Yen (Avatamsaka) teaching and was regarded as a skilful interpreter of (Patriarch) Hsien Shou's doctrine. Said he to the guests: "The Buddha set up a Dharma which consists in wiping out gradually, from the stage of Hinayana to that of Perfect Teaching, all concepts of *is* and *is not* to realize true permanence for the achievement of myriads of sublime virtues and the final attainment of Buddhahood. I have heard that a mere Ch'an shout can turn worldlings into Saints; this seems to contradict the sutras and treatises. If a shout can pass through all the five stages of our Hua Yen school, I shall concede that it is right, otherwise it is just heresy."

All the Ch'an monks looked at Chi Ch'eng who said: "The Venerable Dharma-master's query does not require an answer from the three great Ch'an masters, and though I am the youngest among them, I shall be able to clear away his delusion." He then called the Dharma-master who answered: "Yes." Chi Ch'eng said: "According to the Venerable Sir's interpretation of the Hua Yen Teaching, Hinayana deals with existence; Mahayana in its primary stage, with non-

existence; Mahayana in its final stage, with the doctrine of neither existence nor non-existence; the Sudden school, with the identity of existence and non-existence; and the Perfect Teaching, with reality without existence yet existing and without non-existence yet non-existent. As to our sect's One-shout, it can pass through not only these five Hua Yen stages, but also all kinds of arts, crafts and philosophies."

He then gave a thundering shout and asked the Dharma-master: "Did you hear?" The Dharma-master replied: "Yes." Chi Ch'eng said: "As you heard it, it stands for *is* and passes through the Hinayana teaching".

A little later he asked: "Do you hear?" The Dharma-master replied: "I do not." Chi Ch'eng said: "If you do not hear, it stands for *is not* and passes through the Mahayana's primary stage."

He then looked at the Dharma-master and said: "At first, when I gave a shout, you said you heard it, and as my voice has vanished, you now say you do not hear it. When you say that it *is not* heard now, it really *was* heard before and when you said that it *was* heard before, it *is not* now. So that which neither *is* nor *is not* passes through the Mahayana's final stage."

"When I first gave a shout, its existence was not really existence for it is its (present) non-existence that reveals its (previous) existence. As I do not give a shout now, its non-existence is not really non-existence for it was its (previous) existence that revealed its (present) non-existence. This is identity of *is* and *is not* and passes through the Sudden school."

"You should know that that shout of mine is (now) not used as a shout¹ and is beyond both is and is not. It is above all feelings and explanation. When you speak of is, it does not set up a particle of dust and when you speak of is not, it embraces boundless space. It intermingles with hundreds, thousands and hundreds of thousands of shouts; hence its ability to pass through the Perfect Teaching."

Thereupon the Dharma-master rose from his seat to bow his thanks. Chi Ch'eng again said: "Not only can this shout pass through the five Hua Yen stages, but even speech, silence, motion and stillness, all times from the past to the present, boundless space in the ten directions, the vast variety of phenomena, the six realms of existence and four forms of birth, all Buddhas of the three times, and Saints and Sages, the 84,000 Dharma-doors to Enlightenment, hundreds and thousands of states of Samadhi and countless profound meanings accord with the noumenon and fundamental quality and are of the same substance as all phenomena in the universe; this is the Dharmakaya. As the three realms of existence come from the mind and all things are created by Consciousness, the uniformity of the four seasons and of the eight annual divisions² and the sameness of the positive and negative principles are called the nature of Dharma (Dharmata). Hence the Avatamsaka Sutra says: "The nature of Dharma is omnipresent;; the material and immaterial as well as sound and form are contained in a particle of dust which comprises the four profound meanings.³ The unimpeded interaction of noumenon and phenomenon obtains everywhere for they enter each other without differentiation and mix with each other without unity; all this is covered by this one-shout. But this is still an expedient set up to convert people and serves as a temporary rest, but they

have not yet arrived at the Treasure House. For you are not clear about our Patriarch's sect which aims at Transmission from Mind to Mind and Sealing of Dharma by Dharma, without setting up Scriptures, for the perception of self-nature and attainment of Buddhahood. There still is the Upward Path⁴ which no Saints will transmit to you."

The Dharma-master asked: "What is the Upward Path?" Chi Ch'eng replied: "Look downward⁴ to awaken to it." The Dharma-master asked: "What is the Treasure House?" Chi Ch'eng replied: "This state is beyond your reach." The Dharma-master said: "May the Venerable Master be compassionate enough to reveal it to me." Chi Ch'eng replied:

"Even the ocean may undergo a change
But I shall never disclose it to you."

The Dharma-master was speechless and then left. The emperor was greatly pleased with Chi Ch'eng's erudition which was admired by all those present.

¹ See also *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, second series, pp. 96-7 for detailed explanation of Lin Chi's four kinds of shouts.

² The four seasons, two equinoxes and two solstices.

³ According to the Hua Yen doctrine, the realm of Dharma (Dharmata) comprises: (1) the phenomenal realm, with differentiation; (2) the noumenal realm, with unity; (3) the realm of both the noumenal and phenomenal which are interdependent; and (4) the realm of phenomena which are also interdependent.

⁴ The Upward Path is the transcendental Path. To look upward or downward is a Ch'an idiom. To look downward is to look into externals which spring from the mind and trace them back to their source for the realization of self-mind and perception of self-nature. To look upward is to look into the Absolute which is inexpressible and beyond the comprehension of deluded people. It is, therefore, futile to teach the Absolute which is indescribable and can be realized only by personal experience; hence Chi Ch'eng says: "No Saints will transmit it to you" and "I shall never disclose it to you."



The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by PROF. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

CHAPTER THREE

1

Arjuna said :

If you consider understanding superior to action, O Scourge of the Foes, why then, You of the Beautiful-Locks, do you urge me to this fearful action ?

When told that action cannot lead one to Liberation it is natural to say : " All right, then, let me renounce action and just meditate." Some one said this to the Maharshi and he replied : " Try and see, It is all right if you can but you will find that your own mind demands activity." Arjuna falls into the same mistake and in v. 5 is given the same answer. It is further explained to him that the remedy is not inactivity, which is not possible to man, but egoless activity. This

also the Maharshi used to say : as he put it, it is not doing that has to be adjoined but only the illusion that you are the doer.

2

With what seems to be unclear speech you confuse my mind, as it were. Please tell me the one way by which I may attain the supreme good.

3

Sri Bhagavan said :

In this world a twofold path was taught by me of old, O Blameless One, : the path of knowledge for introverts and the path of action for extroverts.

Arjuna, as a Kshatriya, was directed to the Path of Action, but it is not to be supposed that less was therefore demanded of him. As he was told in the previous chapter, he is expected to transcend the polarities and the three gunas and thereby realize Identity. "But," as Dr. Radhakrishnan says in his commentary, "this distinction is not ultimate, for all men are in different degrees both introverts and extroverts." As the Maharshi said (as quoted in our October 1964 editorial): "The four margas, karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana, are not exclusive of one another. Each is, however, described separately in classical works only to convey an idea of the appropriate aspect of God to appeal readily to the aspirant according to his disposition."

4

Not by refraining from activity does a man attain freedom from action, nor by mere renunciation does he gain perfection.

5

Indeed, no one can remain even for a moment really inactive, for one is driven helplessly to action by the qualities of Nature.

6

The deluded person who controls his physical organs but lets his mind brood on the objects of sense is known as a hypocrite.

7

He it is who excels, Arjuna, who controls his senses with his mind and employs his physical organs in karma yoga without attachment.

8

Perform your allotted duty, for action is better than inaction. Even the preservation of life in the body is impossible without action.

9

People in this world are fettered by action unless it is performed as a sacrifice. Therefore, O Son of Kunti, let your action be sacrifice free from attachment.

It is to be remembered that the English word 'sacrifice' means etymologically 'make sacred' or 'sanctify.' The Sanskrit word is used in the Gita with a wide meaning covering 'sanctify' and 'sacrifice' in the modern meaning and even ritualistic sacrifice. It implies the dedication of one's actions to God.

10

In the beginning Prajapati (as Creator), made men together with sacrifice and said: "By this you shall propagate and it shall be your cow of plenty."

11

Nourish the gods through this and let them nourish you. Thus nourishing one another you shall attain the highest good.

Here, of course, there is no reference to God as Supreme Being but to establishing harmony with higher powers which will be reflected by harmony on earth.

12

Nourished by sacrifice, the gods will bestow on you the enjoyments you desire. He who enjoys their gifts without offering to them in return is indeed a thief.

13

The righteous who eat the food remaining from sacrifice are absolved of all sins, but the impious who cook for themselves alone eat sin.

That is that food should be offered first in sacrifice and only afterwards partaken of. Analogously with all other enjoyments of life. See also Ch. IX, v. 27 for a still more emphatic assertion of this.

14

Creatures are the product of food, food is the product of rain, rain the product of sacrifice, and sacrifice the product of action.

15

Action is the product of the Vedās, and they of the Imperishable; hence the all-pervading Brahman is ever-present in sacrifice.

16

He who does not follow the cycle thus set in motion, O Son of Pritha, is sinful and self-indulgent and lives in vain.

17

For him, however, who rejoices only in the Self, is gratified with the Self and content with the Self no action is incumbent.

18

He has nothing to gain by actions done or to lose by those undone. He is not dependent on any one for the achievement of any object.

Krishna has been speaking of the necessary harmonisation of life. In these last two verses he reminds Arjuna that this does not apply to one whose life is already harmonised by absorption in the Self.

19

Therefore without attachment perform always the actions that are incumbent, for by disinterested activity man attains the Supreme.

20

It was by action that Janaka and others attained perfection. Perform actions, therefore, you also, as an example to mankind.

Janaka is a legendary king who had attained Enlightenment, (and also the father of Sita, Lord Rama's wife).

21

For whatever a great man does others imitate; whatever standard he sets up the people emulate.

22

For me, O Son of Pritha, there is no action incumbent in the three worlds, nor anything unattained to attain, yet do I act.

23

If ever I ceased from unwearied action, O Son of Pritha, men would in all ways follow my example.

24

If I ceased from action these worlds would fall in ruin; I should cause social confusion and bring destruction on these people.

25

As the ignorant act from attachment, O Bharata, so should the wise act without attachment as an example to the people.

26

The wise man should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant who are attached to action. He also should engage in action, but as a form of yoga, and urge others to action.

27

When all actions are performed by the qualities of Nature, only he who is confused by the ego-sense imagines himself to be the actor.

28

But he, O Mighty-Armed, who discerns the qualities and their modes of action, is never attached, knowing that it is the qualities that act upon the qualities.

29

Those who are deluded by the qualities of Nature become attached to the actions produced by them; but he who knows the Whole should not unsettle the ignorant who sees only a part.

30

Fight, therefore, surrendering, all your actions to Me, with mind centred on the Self, without desire or egoism and from your fever (of doubt) set free.

31

Those who constantly follow this teaching of mine with firm faith and without cavilling are set free from activity.

32

But know those who despise my teaching and reject it, to be deluded as to wisdom, senselessly doomed to perdition.

33

Even an enlightened man acts according to his nature. All creatures conform to their nature ; what can restraint do ?

34

Each sense has its objects of attraction and aversion, but one should not succumb to these for they are impediments on the path.

35

Better one's own dharma, however imperfect, than that of another though well performed. Better even to die following one's own dharma, for that of another is perilous.

This is considered one of the fundamental verses of the Gita : that one should follow one's own nature or destiny and not try to emulate that of others. The word translated 'imperfect' can mean either 'imperfectly performed' or 'inferior.' It applies primarily to social position. It implies also that one should develop according to one's own nature and not emulate that of some other person one envies or admires.

36

Arjuna said :

But what is it that drives a man to sin even against his will, as though under compulsion, Krishna of the Vrishnis ?

37

Sri Bhagavan said :

It is desire and anger born of the quality rajas, utterly blinding and sinful. Know this is to be the enemy.

38

As fire is concealed by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo in the womb, so is this teaching concealed by it.

39

Knowledge is darkened, O Son of Kunti, by this eternal foe of the knower in the form of desire, an insatiable conflagration.

40

Senses, mind (manas) and intellect (budhi) are said to be its abode. Obscuring wisdom through them, it deludes the embodied.

41

Therefore, Prince of the Bharatas, control your senses first ; thus shall you destroy this destroyer of knowledge and discrimination.

42

Mighty, they say, are the senses, mightier than these the mind, mightier than that the intellect, but mightier still is He.

The 'He' is ambiguous : it may refer to the Spirit or, as a warning, to desire. The following verse suggests that it is the former meaning that is intended.

43

Thus knowing Him who is beyond the intellect, O Mighty in Arms, control yourself by the Self and slay the enemy in the form of desire, hard though it may be.

Here ends the third chapter, entitled
The Yoga of Action

FROM THE WELL OF MEDITATION

By DOROTHY C. DONATH

Dead names and personal attributes
Belong neither to Action nor to Reality;
The perfect name is No-name,
And the perfect action is without motive.

Be relaxed in deep things
And quiet in little things,
Like a pond those shallow water
Pictures the still bottom as a glass admits
light,

And whose deep water
Moves not with the ruffling wind.
Have no thought but to let the answer
Rise to the surface
As bubbles rise
From the lake-bottom springs.

The awakened mind
Neither thinks nor speculates —
The awakened mind
Knows.
Silver and gold are kindred metals,
But who can strike a light from them?
The answer is given in an instant —
Without thought.

Understand without effort
And move without struggle;
Thus does the mind manifest itself
And no thing is there to be manifested.

The awakened mind
Neither thinks nor speculates.
Void is it,
And without form;
Void it is,
And no attribute is there.

The wind blows,
But no hand catches it;
The thunder rolls,
But whither goes the sound?

Pride and ego mask the inner light,
And no cloud of earth can equal them;
Rain falls from these clouds,
And the hours know but tears.

Who is it that weeps
And cannot move the barrier?
Find that one — if you can.
Heaven and Hell are not his hiding place,
Nor does the earth harbour him;
Only the shadows cover him,
And nothing is there.

The ball is tossed,
And the player catches it;
But no hand catches
The answer to vain desires.

Under the mantle of Maya
Who can see the stars?
Under the ego-shadow
Who can find the light?
Silver and gold are kindred metals,
But who can strike a light from them?

Regard a woven garment —
Never can it clothe the mind.
Regard a valued trinket —
Never can it pay for wasted days.

The hand holds a key,
But the fingers close upon it
And it vanishes;
The mind holds an answer,
But thought grasps it
And there is nothing there.

Pay the price of silence
And a thousand voices answer;
Speak,
And silence alone replies.

Great Space without
At first seems to be Voidness;
But Voidness is within —
And only the mind can compass it.

This song is no-song —
Why seek for a meaning?
The questions were answered
Before ever a word was spoken

— By Courtesy, 'Golden Light',
Penang.



REVIEWS

YOUR GOD IS MY GOD: By Gladys de Meuter.
(Spearman, pp. 160, 15s.)

There are two great pitfalls in the study of different religions: one is to see them all from the viewpoint of one's own (which necessarily makes all others look inferior to it); the other is to make them appear identical in substance whereas they are so only in essence. Mrs. de Meuter avoids both. She does not compare religions but devotes a separate chapter to each, expounding each from its own viewpoint. The book is not academic in tone but devotional, almost ecstatic, couched in the form of dialogues between the Soul of the World and the Nameless. Nevertheless it is far more scholarly than one expects such a book to be, each chapter being based on translations or paraphrases of its scriptures.

In a concluding chapter she represents the universal essence of religion as Sufism: "a Sufi may be in outward appearance a Muslim, Hindu, Christian or Jew." (p. 145). "But in this she is mistaken." A Sufi, unlike an exoteric Muslim, recognizes the essential truth of all religions but his approach to this Essence is nevertheless Islamic, using an Islamic technique and terminology. The Vedantist (or Buddhist or Christian) may recognise the Sufi approach, as the Sufi does his, but he will use a different technique and terminology and cannot therefore be called a Sufi. Nor does he call himself one.

Despite this error, however, and despite certain small inaccuracies, this is both a wise and a beautiful book and can be strongly recommended.

PATHS TO INNER CALM: By Marie B. Byles.
(Allen & Unwin, pp. 207, Price 28s.)

In her delightful book 'Journey into Burmese Silence' Miss Byles described a meditation centre, open to lay meditators also, where the technique practised was concentration on the constant atomic 'going-coming' evanescence of the body-mind complex. People of a theoretical turn of mind will marvel how this ancient wisdom is corroborated by modern atomic physics. Practical readers will see it as a beautifully straight path to anatta, 'no-ego'. Writing with obvious understanding and experience, Miss Byles shows how effective it can be when practised under an able guide.

The first part of her new book describes a return to the same meditation centre and again conjures up a delightful picture of Burmese life and people. Passing from Burma to Japan, she has a masterly link-chapter on the difference, rather of approach than dogma, between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

As she has already indicated in her article in *The Mountain Path* of July 1964, she was not attracted by Zen. She found the life in the meditation centres too austere, the discipline too harsh, the practices too ritualistic, the roshis too inaccessible, the vaunted spontaneity of Zen almost wholly lacking, as also the basic Buddhist quality of meta or loving-kindness.

What attracted her in Japan was the new group of Ittoen, drawn from various religions, which specialises in loving service. She found and appreciated a strong Gandhian influence on it. While staying there she was able to join a latrine-cleaning expedition to a neighbouring village.

Miss Byles not only writes with considerable understanding but also with keen observation, ready wit and lively sympathies. As a result, her book is as readable as it is instructive, an attractive travel book as well as a sensitive account of different Buddhist approaches.

THE BOOK OF CHANGE: By John Blofeld. (Allen & Unwin, pp. 228, 35s.)

The I Ching (pronounced, Mr. Blofeld tells us, Yee Jing) is the oldest Chinese book, being already ancient in the time of Confucius. Basically it consists of hexagrams or groups of six parallel horizontal lines, whole and broken, arranged in their 64 possible combinations. To these a written text was added. Confucius added a commentary to the text and countless others have since.

The whole line is yang, which is fundamentally equivalent to Purusha, and the broken yin, fundamentally equivalent to Prakriti. Therefore the hexagrams show the possible combinations of Purusha-Prakriti, positive-negative, male-female, active-passive, light-dark. They have profound metaphysical and cosmological implications, but Mr. Blofeld is concerned here only with their use in divination.

He is completely convincing in arguing the validity of this use and the correctness of the replies received, if and only if, the work is approached with integrity and in a spirit of reverence. Indeed, he insists that questions as to the right course of action to be pursued are more in order than simple questions as to what will happen.

The book is likely to have a wide sale owing to the interest people take in divination. It deserves it in view of the serious moral tone with which the subject is approached and the clear and workmanlike nature of the exposition.

THE UNKNOWN CHRIST OF HINDUISM: By Raymond Panikkar. (Darton, Longman and Todd, paperback, pp. 163, 12s. 6d.)

Fr. Panikkar, a Catholic priest whose father was Hindu and mother Catholic, declares that Christ as Logos or Son of God is the Principle that inspired the formulation of Hinduism, as of all other religions. From this he argues that Hindus should acknowledge the unique and ultimate position among religions of the doctrine taught by Christ as Jesus of Nazareth. But this is a *non sequitur* and is either unintelligent or disingenuous. Sri Krishna declared that whenever righteousness is eclipsed and unrighteousness prevails he manifests himself and that those who worship other Gods really worship him; but

Hindus do not argue from this that all followers of other religions should take the Gita as their Gospel. They can equally well worship some other Incarnation of the One—for instance, that of Jesus of Nazareth. It is Christian refusal or inability to see this that led to so much persecution in the past and that lies behind tendentious calls for 'dialogue' to-day.

YOGIRAJ SHRI SHRI LAHIRI MAHASAYA: By J. C. Bhattacharya. (Yogada Satsanga, 166 Belilios Rd., Howrah, Calcutta, pp. 74, Rs. 2.25.)

Religion is a path from darkness to light, from death to immortality; therefore its vitality is indicated by its continued ability to guide men on this path, that is to produce saints and sages. It is a sign of the spiritual vitality of Hinduism that a constant succession of these spiritual champions, these vanquishers of the ego, has continued right up to modern times. Many of them have been little known because a non-proselytising religion does not normally advertise; but they have existed and still do.

Sri Lahiri Mahasaya (1828-1895) was the great promulgator of Kriya Yoga. He is fairly widely known through the disciple of his disciple, that is his spiritual grandson, Swami Yogananda, whose 'Self-Realization Fellowship' has spread in the West; but he has had a number of successors in his native Bengal also. This is the first biography of him in English. It shows him already in the 19th Century exemplifying the tendency to the simplification of ritual technicalities remarked upon in the editorial to this issue. He simplified the technique of Kriya Yoga so as to make it accessible to householders also; and indeed Sri Mahasaya himself was married and a wage-earner. He even opened it to non-Hindus and had Muslims also among his disciples.

This is not a biography written with literary skill, but it is useful and informative for readers interested in the less widely known Indian saints.

GEMS FROM BHAGAVAN: By A. Devaraja Mudaliar. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, pp. 55, Re. 1.)

With remarkable lucidity Devaraja Mudaliar (author of *Day by Day with Bhagavan* and *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*) has strung together Bhagavan's pronouncements on fundamental questions. The subjects dealt with include enquiry and surrender, grace and effort, Self and mind, reincarnation, predestination, Realization. For those who want clear statements free from philosophical complexities this will be a very valuable little book.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

Swami Omkar

'Cosmic Flashes', 'Cosmic Fast', 'In the Hours of Silence', 'Self-Realization Now and Here', are simply collections of observations and reflections of Swami Omkar, mostly written as the fruit of lengthy periods of fasting. They are not on sale but are donated free to those who write for them to his ashram: Sri Shanti Ashram, via Sankhavararam, East Godavari Dt., A.P.

Swami Omkar is perhaps best known for his peace-propaganda; but it is not the usual rather insipid variety, since he always insists that peace must be found within oneself before it can be spread abroad. As he says in 'Cosmic Flashes': "Peace is the birthright of every soul, nay, the Soul is Peace. Santoyam Atma, says the Upanishad. With every inhalation of yours try to take in Peace, and try to give out Peace only with every exhalation. Your very life should become Peace. He who thus realizes Peace realizes God, for verily the two are one."

He is not a guru in the usual sense of giving initiation and upadesha, but many who visit him revere him as such. He worships God in all he sees: in the ocean, comparing it to "the ocean of Reality, the Atman;" in the breath that is the Source of all breath, the Infinite that is manifesting itself, in life as "a process of silent, slow and steady growth towards the goal." He is even capable of seeing God in the ugly and sinful; he sees everywhere the Face of God, in health and in sickness, in good fortune and ill. He has a delightful little fragment on the mosquito that stings him as a Divine reminder. He speaks of cosmic consciousness as "something not to be acquired anew but that is possessed by every soul eternally." He exclaims: "Impossible to forget God! How glorious! Every sound expresses Him. Every manifestation springs from Him." He longs to communicate his experience "that God is here and everywhere, that He is eternally one with us, and that all we have to

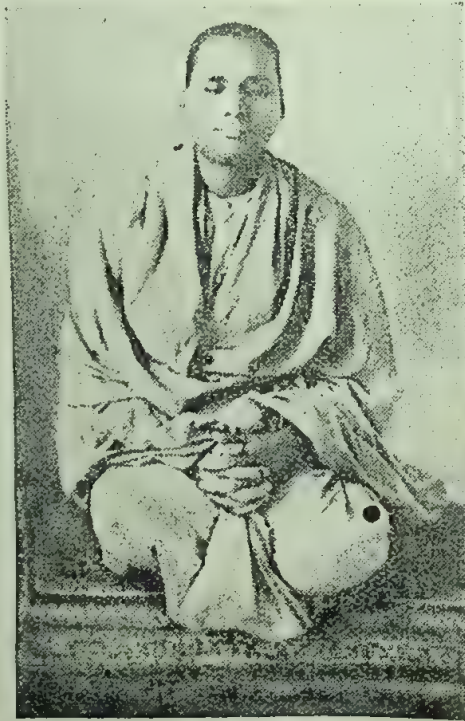
do is to be aware of His all-pervasive Presence." That is the golden thread running through his book: that we have to feel the interpenetrating Presence of the Absolute, that "religion is to come face to face with God that is within and without, that real happiness is only in union with God, the Indwelling Light."

He speaks also of the power of thought. What we are is the result of our thinking. Therefore it can be said that we form our own destiny by our thoughts. By being master of one's thoughts one becomes master of one's destiny.

In 'Cosmic Fast' the Swami has much to say about "The conscious realization and recognition of the Infinite and Eternal Light, Omnipresent and Interpenetrating Truth." He speaks of "The boundless Love of God, a perennial flow of the Living Water of Life, Light and Love" and pleads: "Let us be worthy channels to receive His never ending floods of power and blessings." Fasting has led him to ecstasy which, he declares, is more than purifying the body; it is purifying our inmost being in the stillness of our own soul, in the sanctuary of our heart, feeling Divinity within by centering on the Most High. Overcome by the Presence, he prays:

"Lord, as I am feeling Thy Presence now, in all inspired intensity, let me continue to feel It thus for ever. Let me not forget Thee even for a single moment, Thou art my life, my soul and my all-in-all. With Thee I am complete! I need nothing else beside Thee for in having Thee who art in all things I am having everything!"

I. G. SCHULTZ.



Swami Omkar

TULSIDAS: By Chandra Kumari Handoo. (Orient Longmans, Bombay. pp. 300, Price Rs. 18.)

Tulsidas is a household name throughout the Hindi-knowing regions of India, where his famous Hindi work *Ramacharitamansa* — popularly known as *Ramayana* — is perhaps the most widely read book in Hindu households.

In this book, Srimati Chandra Kumari Handoo has taken pains to collect a rich variety of data which throw fresh light on the man Tulsidas, his influence on contemporary life, his spiritual sadhana, and some of the miracles wrought by his faith in his lord, Sri Rama. His works were extensive—he was the author of about a dozen books—and are acclaimed by scholars as works of the highest art.

The *Ramayana*—the most well-known of his works, his *magnum opus*—is largely cast in the form of dialogues, which contain numerous gems of love and wisdom: revealing peaks of devotion as well as of knowledge and service, and also harmonising various pathways to God. In the actual story narrated in the *Ramayana*, Tulsi depicts Rama, as well as many other characters associated around him, as upholding the highest *dharma* (righteous conduct)—the very beautiful ideals of a son, a brother, a wife, a friend, a teacher, a king, a servant, etc. etc.—thus bringing out in bold relief the spiritual and moral values inherent in Indian culture. Among the great men of recent times who have borne testimony to the inspiration they derived in their early lives from the *Ramayana* have been Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mahatma Gandhi. Rightly has the learned authoress observed that the *Ramacaritamanasa* has entered the life and soul of millions of the people of India. The secret of this would appear to lie (besides the inspired nature of the work) in the simple language and style used by the poet, which could be understood by the learned and the common folk alike at their own levels. Tulsidas was indeed a pioneer in the use of simple Hindi instead of Sanskrit for religious literature.

A valuable feature of the book is an excellent selection of beautiful and significant quotations from Tulsidas' works rendered into English, which enrich the book and add to its usefulness to the English-reading public.

MADAN MOHAN VARMA.

THE DIVINE VOICE OF SRI SRI THAKUR HARANATH OR UPADESAMRITA—PART II:
By A. Ramakrishna Sastri. (Published by the author, 3/19-A, Innespet, Rajahmundry-2, A.P., pp. 316. Rs. 4.)

Sri Thakur Haranath, whose birth centenary was celebrated on July 2nd this year, was one of the galaxy of great saints with whom modern India has been blessed. Unfortunately, however, he was little known outside the three provinces of Bengal, Bombay and Andhra. He had no philo-

sophy to propound but taught the creed of divine love and practised it in his own life without stint and with no restriction as to religion or caste or saint or sinner. He was an ecstatic and worked an extraordinary profusion of miracles. He followed Lord Gauranga (Chaitanya) of Bengal in propagating the creed of love, and indeed his followers regard him as an Avatar of Sri Gauranga, or rather both of them as Avatars of Sri Krishna.

This book is not a biography of the saint. Indeed it does not fall into any regular category of literature. It could rather be described as a source book or the raw material from which a book on Sri Haranath could be compiled. His teachings, published and unpublished, have been gathered from various sources. His messages, discourses, precepts, sayings and letters have been brought together, commented on and arranged under various headings. A valuable and extensive introduction has been added bringing out salient points in the saint's life and his attitude towards devotees and others.

It is to be regretted that the English style and grammar and the printing and get-up of the book are not worthy of the love and devotion with which it has been produced.

KRISHNA BIKSHU.

KAIVALYA NAVANEETA (THE CREAM OF EMANCIPATION): Translated into English by Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi from the Tamil original of Sri Tandavaraya Swami. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, pp. 74, Price Re. 1.)

Pursuant to the very laudable desire to bring to the notice of the discriminating public all the world over, the classics of the Vedanta Philosophy that India is justly famous for, Sri Ramanasramam has now published *Kaivalya Navaneeta* in English. This famous Tamil classic, comparable in its greatness to the *Viveka Chudamani* of Sri Shankara in Sanskrit, was originally composed in Tamil by Sri Tandavaraya Swami and although well known and often referred to by Tamil scholars, lacks a current translation in English to draw the attention of readers not familiar with the original classical Tamil. In bringing out this English edition and thus making the precious wisdom of this classical work available to a wide public, Sri Ramanasramam has rendered a distinct service to the world now eager to drink from the fount of Vedanta.

Sri Bhagavan has, amongst other classics of Vedanta that he used to refer to, often cited

from this work, *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, as may be gleaned from the record of his 'TALKS' published by the Asramam and it is indeed fortunate that the translator* happens to be the compiler of the 'TALKS', steeped in Vedantic tradition and terminology and therefore in a position to do justice to the original. The spirit of the original can well be glimpsed in his translation although, as in every case, opinion may differ on the choice of a word here and there. It is no mean tribute to the scholarship of the translator that whatever differences there may be on the choice of particular words the spirit of the original has been ably reproduced in the translation.

The merit of this work, *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, has been well brought out by Professor V. A. Devasenapathi of Madras University in his Introduction "From the vast ocean of milk (the *Upnishads* etc.) the great teachers have drawn the milk of wisdom and filled it in pots (ancient texts). Tandavaraya Swami, the author of *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, says that he has extracted the butter from the milk. Those who have obtained this (being fed on the butter of divine wisdom — *Brahmajñānam* — and being eternally satisfied) will not roam about feeding on dust (non-real objects of sense)."

More words from a reviewer are needless — nay an impertinence — to commend this inestimable work to the seeker of Truth — East or West.

Sein.

✓ THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI: By Charles Johnston. (J. M. Watkins, pp. 117. Price 12s. 6d.)

The book is a translation and interpretation of the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali.

The different *padas* have been well interpreted: the author has tried to show lucidly the growth of the realisation of the spiritual being of man. Indeed, it is a valuable contribution to yoga literature.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA.

✓ THREE MUSLIM SAGES, AVICENNA, SUHRAWARDI, IBN ARABI: By Seyyed Hossein Nasr. (Harvard University Press in America, and Oxford University Press in England and India. Pp. 185, Price \$3.95, Rs. 19.75.)

Actually only the third of the three great Muslim writers dealt with in the three Harvard University guest lectures out of which this book arose merits the title of Sage.

Abu Ali Sinha, known to the West as Avicenna (980-1037 A.D.), was a great master of science and in particular medicine. He was also the

principle introducer of Aristotelian philosophy into the Islamic world.

Suhrawardi (1153-1191) — not to be confused with the Sufi Saint who founded the Order of that name which is still widespread in the Eastern part of the Islamic world — stood midway between the philosophers and the Sufis. To Aristotelian or rational philosophy he opposed inspirational or illuminist teaching, putting intuitive above rational knowledge.

It was Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) who was the true Sage, that is the man of Divine Knowledge and Experience. He it was more than any other who formulated the intellectual expression of Sufism both on the purely metaphysical plane and in derived sciences such as cosmology and psychology. Apart from this he also practised and expounded the technique of spiritual training, being not only a writer but a Sufi Sheikh whose Order still survives.

His teaching reached the ultimate simplicity of pointing out (as did Ramana Maharshi) that it is not a matter of killing the ego but of realizing that it never existed: "Most of those who know God make a ceasing of existence and a ceasing of that ceasing a condition of attaining the knowledge of God, and that is an error and a clear oversight. For the knowledge of God does not presuppose the ceasing of existence nor the ceasing of that ceasing. For things have no existence and what does not exist cannot cease to exist.... Then if thou knowest thyself without either being or ceasing to be, then thou knowest God; but if not then not." (p. 115).

His intuitive inner knowledge led him, as it did some of the great Persian and Indian Sufis, to a perception of the equal validity of all religions, which so many modern exponents of Sufism have lost sight of:

"My heart has become capable of every form; it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks, And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables of the Torah and the Book of the Koran. I follow the religion of Love; whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

The author gives a vivid account of the life and teachings of these three great Islamic writers. He also sketches in their intellectual background and ancestry, making this an attractive and informative book.

* For a note on whom see our Ashram Bulletin of Jan. 1964.—Editor.

THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM: By Ameer Ali. (University Paperbacks, Methuen, pp. XXII and 514, Price 21s.)

Islam can stand on its own merits; it has no need to run down other religions in order to shine by comparison. This unfortunately is what the present author does in his introductory chapter and wherever the text allows. The same treatment has been meted out to Islam by so many Christian writers that his learned and sympathetic account of its rise and spread comes as a welcome contrast. However it spoils a good case by overstating it. The effect would have been greater if the presentation had been less partisan. For instance, outrageous casuistry is used to try to prove that the wars by which Islam spread were defensive. Of course they were not. They were jihad. The early Muslims were convinced that they had a better religion and way of life than their neighbours and had no compunction in imposing it on them. Nor did any stigma attach to aggressive wars in those days.

What will most interest *THE MOUNTAIN PATH* readers is the concluding chapter, written specially for the present edition (the bulk of the book having been first published in 1922), for in this the author deals with the spiritual traditions and history of Sufis. Unfortunately he shows little understanding or appreciation of it.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

CHRIST APPEARS: By Mildred Hayward (Jnana Devi). (Sri Shanti Ashram, via Sankhavaram, East Godavari Dt., A.P., pp. 125, free on request.)

Christian reflections and exhortations are apt to evince rather an insipid piety. Mildred Hayward's are an exception. There is real understanding and strong purpose in them. Apart from Swami Omkar of Shanti Ashram, where this third edition is published, they seem, at least to this reviewer, to show the influence of Joel Goldsmith. Two very healthy influences.

SACITTARIUS.

ANCIENT BELIEFS AND MODERN SUPERSTITIONS: By Martin Lings. Perennial Books. pp. 76. Price 12s. 6d.

In only 76 small pages, Martin Lings ranges convincingly through the ages and over the continents, comparing ancient wisdom with modern ignorance, the inner riches of old with our profane poverty which completely ignores the spiritual reality in which we live and move and have our being. Tilting against the much

vaunted theories of evolution and progress, he offers instead that of devolution based on the four deteriorating ages of Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron (the equivalent of the Hindu yugas), the last being our present, spiritually dark age. He writes mainly in a Christian context but gathers in support widely from other sources. Perhaps Hindu quotations predominate, but he includes also Islamic, Taoist, Buddhist, Jewish and scientific as well as statements by the Christian mystics, old and new, to support the validity of his book. One wonders, however, what claim the Ave Maria has to be quoted (on p. 67) as the typical Christian prayer when obviously the Pater Noster holds that position. Mr. Lings also runs counter to modern tendencies in praising the Hindu caste system, in the sense of varnashrama, on the grounds that in its original and ideal form it provides a necessary hierarchy.

E. G. BLANCHARD.

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

The new fare the Buddhist Publication Society has to offer includes a lecture on Buddhism in the United States by the Venerable Vinitha, a booklet on 'The Buddha's Practical Teaching' by John D. Ireland and a reprint of a translation of the *Kandarika* and *Potaliya Suttas* with introduction and notes. Its most interesting item is 'Dialogues on the Dhamma', a double number (80-81) of 'The Wheel' by Francis Story, dispelling common misunderstandings of Buddhism in a clear and cogent way.

This last contains the significant sentence: "Buddhism does not claim to have the monopoly of knowledge regarding other states of samsaric experience. What it does claim is to have the sole means of gaining release from the samsaric planes." That is just the trouble with the proselytising religions — Buddhism, Christianity, Islam: each of them claims to be the only valid way. How can there be peace, and what use is dialogue, when each of them demands unconditional surrender? Why can't their followers concentrate on their own path and leave others to follow theirs?

Correction:

In our last issue the publisher of 'Essays on Samkhya and Other Systems of Indian Philosophy' by Dr. Anima Sen Gupta was mistakenly given as Patna University Press. Actually it was published by M. Sen, 65/64, Motimahall, Kanpur, U.P.



Ashram Bulletin

MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

Our next issue, that for January 1966, will be dedicated to 'Ramana Sat-Guru.' It will be a special number of large size and on superior paper. No additional charge will be made from subscribers but the cost of a single copy will be Rs. 2.50; 5 sh.; \$ 0.75.

Contributions for this issue are invited and should reach us early as possible, since we shall have to go to press early with it.

The issue for April 1966 will be on 'Prayers and Powers.'

OUR SUBSCRIPTION RATE

From the very beginning the hand of Bhagavan has been felt guiding *The Mountain Path*. When it was still a project, in September 1963, we were discussing what the annual subscription should be when a letter was received containing a five rupee note as a subscription to whatever journal the Ashram might be publishing. We took this as a sign from Bhagavan, and indeed it was, because later H. R. Chadha of Calcutta wrote: "One night Bhagavan appeared to me with some magazines so, feeling this to mean that there was an Ashram magazine, I sent five rupees to the Ashram President next morning, asking him to make me a subscriber. The reply came back 'We don't publish one yet but are planning one and were just discussing the subscription rate when your letter arrived and gave us the hint, so you are subscriber No. 1.'"

THE HOLY HILL

By ARLETTE HANS

I was sitting on Arunachala, not actually meditating but relaxing and seeing myself objectively, as though from outside, when I became aware (I cannot say exactly how) that this was Mt. Sinai on which I was sitting.

What did it mean? That Arunachala-Siva Arunachala-Ramana, is the same as the Mountain where God reveals Himself to Moses and makes known the law? That in coming to a new centre I had not abandoned the old?

A LECTURE

Swami Poornananda Tirtha of Jnana Ashram, Parlikad, in Kerala, editor of the monthly journal *Kaivalya Sudha*, which valiantly and learnedly upholds Hindu traditional lore, paid us a visit in August, during which he gave a lecture on the Maharshi's teaching.

The lecture was delivered in the Old Hall and was well attended. The Swami began by pointing out that the Maharshi adumbrated no new philosophy but presented afresh the traditional Hindu wisdom. He explained that whereas the ordinary man of religion asks about the origin of the world and postulates a God who created it, the Vedantin asks what the world is and finds it to be a mere conglomeration of sense-impressions. From this comes the enquiry to whom the sense-impressions come. Who am I?

The aspect of Self-enquiry as taught by Sri Maharshi on which the Swami dwelt was the attempt to quell thoughts by asking: to whom do these thoughts come? Who am I?

A still youthful Swami, he is rapidly coming into prominence and has already a considerable following. He did not have the opportunity of coming to Sri Maharshi in his lifetime but makes Sri Maharshi's teaching, especially as expressed in Upadesa Saram and Ulladu Narpadu, the foundation of his own. In his lecture here also he quoted extensively from these two works.

NEW YORK

The following announcement of the founding of an Arunachala Ashram in New York reached

us too late for inclusion in our July Bulletin, so we are including it here.

The 15th anniversary of the Mahanirvana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated on 30 April in Carnegie Hall, New York, under the presidentship of Prof. Bernard Tobacman. The principal speaker, Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata; (whose address is given in our correspondence network in this issue) told how Bhagavan came to him in a dream one night while he was in America. He spoke of the wisdom of Bhagavan in which the essential teachings of all religions merge, telling how seekers and devotees from all over the world used to flock to his lotus feet and how, since he left the body, his influence has been radiating through the world even more powerfully. At the end of the meeting Prof. Tobacman announced the formation of a group which would meet regularly for meditation, discussion and study of Bhagavan's teaching. The meeting ended with chanting of Arunachala-Shiva-OM.

VISITORS

Prominent among our visitors during this period was Dr. Das Gupta, Principal of David Hare Training College at Calcutta, who came with his wife and sister and left a convinced devotee.

We also had a visit from Dr. Chandra Sharma, an eminent homoeopathic doctor from London, who came first in Bhagavan's lifetime and has been a number of times since. This time he brought with him his aged parents from Gujerat and his wife and two sons from England.

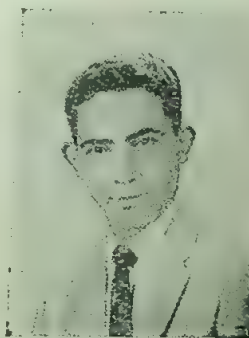
An interesting visitor was Myrta de Barvie from Argentina who has spent several years in India learning Indian classical dancing. She was accompanied by her mother, Argelia de Barvie, who has long been a devotee of Bhagavan and who told us that there is great hunger for spiritual sustenance in Argentina. From indications that reach us, this applies to all the Latin American countries.

Dr. H. Mahadeva Iyer, Scientific Officer, Atomic Energy Establishment, Bombay, and his American wife, Cynthia Iyer, paid their second visit in nine months. Mrs. Iyer first learned of Sri Bhagavan in 1962 while in England from books by Paul Brunton and Arthur Osborne. While in India during 1963-'4 she became an earnest devo-

tee and obtained most of the English publications of the Ashram. As soon as *The Mountain Path* was started she became a subscriber.

The Iyers spent a week at the Ashram last November and were so enchanted by the atmosphere of peace and the pervading presence of Bhagavan that, after their recent trip to the U.S.A., they decided to come for a second visit to Tiruvannamalai before taking up their Bombay life again, and have stayed for a few days.

Dr. Rafael Lozada Carmona came from Venezuela with a letter of introduction from



Dr. Lozada

Irma de Valera. He brought us the names of a few new subscribers and told us of an Arunachala Centre already existing in Venezuela. He already practises Self-enquiry. He plans to stay in our Ashram about six months. He is the professor of Oriental Philosophy in the University of Caracas, Venezuela.

OBITUARY

Sri A. Sivarama Reddiar first came to the Ashram in 1931 and remained there ever since, a continuous service of 34 years. Even as a boy he was inspired by the (Tamil) advaitic songs of Sri Achuthaswami of Polur. After the death of his wife, quite early in life, he turned his attention entirely to the spiritual path. He was initiated by a disciple of Sri Achuthaswami and spent three years wandering about India on foot visiting Swamis and holy places. In the course of his wanderings he came to Sri Ramanasramam, and Bhagavan's powerful gaze dispelled all remaining doubts and captivated him completely. He gave up wandering and decided to remain here, and through Bhagavan's Grace the Sarvadhikari put him in charge of the Ashram book depot, a charge which he retained to within a few days of his passing. His grave manner and complete devotion to Bhagavan won him the respect of other devotees. After a short illness he passed away at the age of 70 in his village of Uttaramerur, where he was taken by his daughter. His absence in the Ashram will long be felt. May he rest in peace at the feet of Sri Bhagavan.

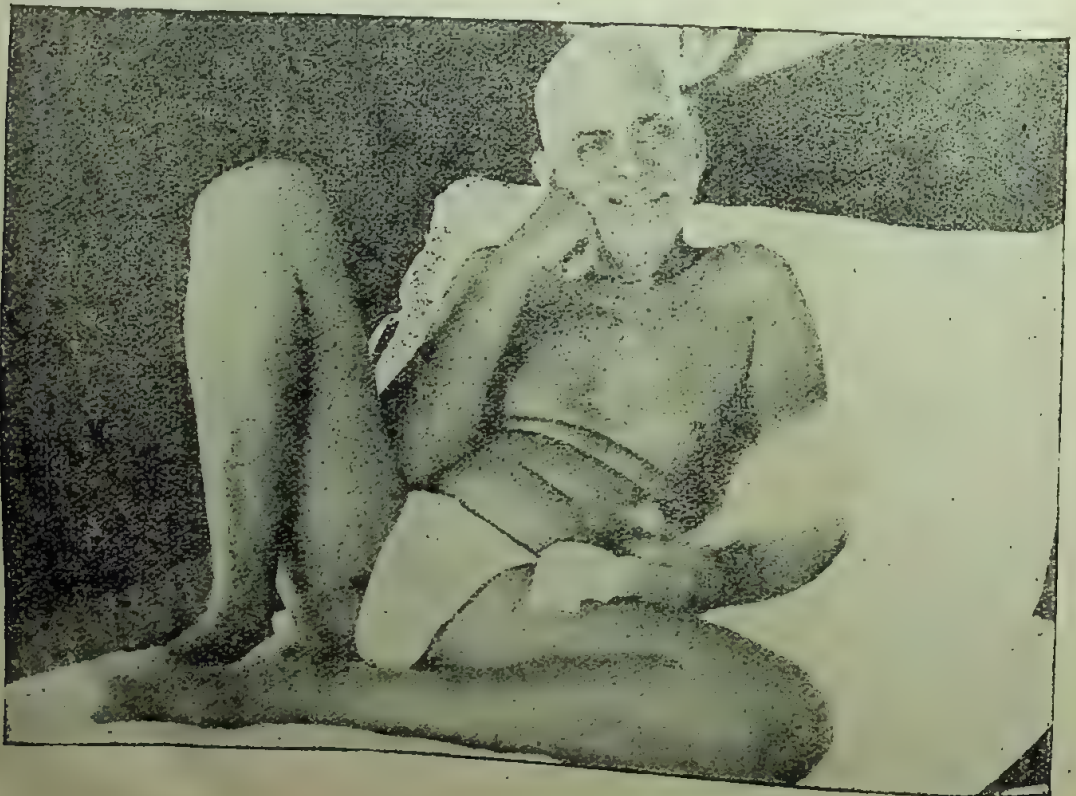
INTRODUCING...

K. K. Nambiar first came to Bhagavan as long ago as 1933. He could only stay for an hour on this first occasion but was captivated from the very start. Much as he would have liked to stay on at the Ashram, he was unable to do so, being a professional engineer. Instead, he exemplified the pattern which Bhagavan always recommended of a man living and working in the world but remembering and making sadhana simultaneously. He has since risen to the very top of his profession, both in government service and in industry, but has remained no less a devotee throughout.

After his first meeting with Bhagavan he prayed silently but fervently to Bhagavan for more opportunities to see him. This prayer was answered by apparent coincidence. The District Board of North Arcot was sub-divided and K. K. Nambiar was appointed Board Engineer for the new district, with headquarters at Tiruvannamalai. He was now able to visit the Ashram almost daily. In this also he conformed to a pattern that was often seen, by choice or destiny, among Bhagavan's disciples: that is for a new

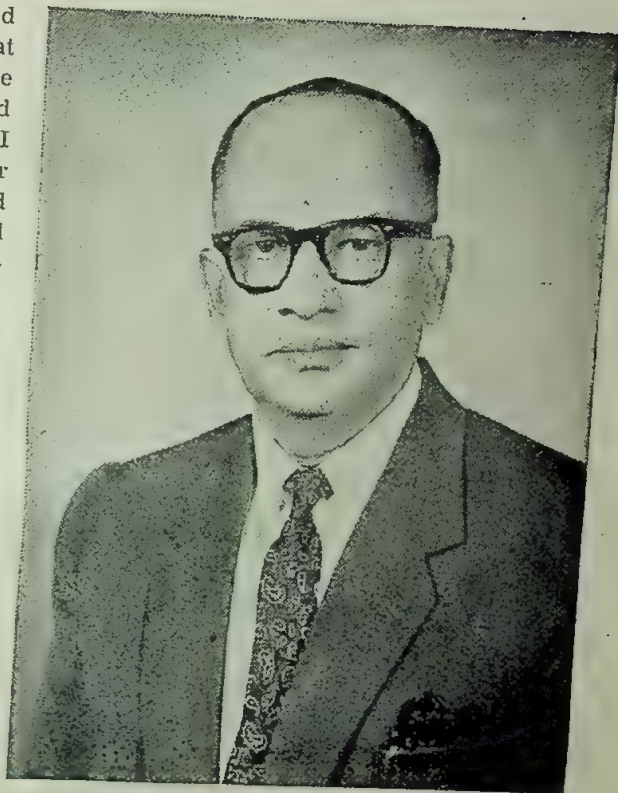
devotee to be kept in close physical proximity to Bhagavan for some time and then to be sent out into the world to cope with life and apply the spiritual viewpoint that had been acquired. K. K. Nambiar was one of those who came through the test valiantly. However far between his visits to the Ashram might be, he remained centred on Bhagavan. Since Bhagavan left the body he has also remained a staunch supporter of the Ashram.

K. K. Nambiar was from the beginning peculiarly receptive to influences from Bhagavan. The following incident related by him in the GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR of 1949 is an example of this. "One evening in the year 1936 when I visited the Ashram I decided to ask an important question of Sri Bhagavan concerning certain spiritual practices. But amidst the solemn hours of Veda parayana in the evening and during meditation that followed I could not make up my mind to ask the question and returned home somewhat disappointed. Early next morning, when I was lying half awake, Sri Bhagavan appeared before me in a dream and answered the very question which I had failed to put to him the previous evening. And before he vanished he also told me that he wanted a note-book. I



said that I had only one readily available and that it was of octavo pocket-size. He said that would do. I woke up with a pleasant thrill. The dream or vision, whichever one may call it, had made such a deep impression on my mind that I could not delay carrying out the behest, however strange it might seem. After an early bath and ablutions I traced out the note-book and hurried to the Ashram. Prostrating myself before Bhagavan as usual, I handed over the note-book to him. He received it with a smile and asked me why I had brought it to him, so I told him in a whisper all about my dream. He immediately called his personal attendant, the late Madhavaswami, and remarked to him: "Didn't I ask you yesterday evening to get a good note-book to write out a Malayalam translation of the Sanskrit text of the Sri Ramana Gita in? You didn't bring one. Well, here is Nambiar who has brought it for me. It seems he had a dream in which I asked for the note-book and he has brought it."

In the same article he records another dream which is of great interest not only in itself but as an illustration of how Bhagavan would sometimes instruct one devotee through another. "On another occasion in the same year I dreamt of the Maharshi seated on his couch with a number of devotees seated on the floor and in meditation. Among them I recognised a young devotee from Goa seated in padmasana and doing pranayama (breath-control). I think his name was Sridhar. While he was doing pranayama I saw sparks rising from the base of his spine up to his head. Bhagavan, who was watching him, said: 'There is no need for all this gymnastics with breath-control. It is easier and safer to follow the method of Self-enquiry as enunciated by me.' Next morning when I went to the Ashram I sought out this young Goanese Swami. I had no previous acquaintance with him and had had no occasion to speak to him before. I gave him a full account of the dream I had had. He was



K. K. Nambiar

visibly moved and, somewhat to my embarrassment, embraced me with delight in the North Indian fashion. He said: 'Brother, I was all the while waiting for an opportunity to ask Bhagavan whether I should continue or give up this practice of pranayama which I have been steadily carrying on for several years past. Indeed, last night, while sitting in the presence of Bhagavan, I was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to put the question to him but couldn't find a suitable occasion. Now there is no need to ask him about it, since he has answered me through you.'

At present K. K. Nambiar is living in Bombay but he remains in close touch with the Ashram and with other devotees.

"You have no need to seek deliverance, since you are not bound".

Hui-hai speaking. Maharshi also.

— W. W. W.



Letters TO THE EDITOR

I was very interested in your July editorial explaining the difficult question of Realization. But apart from the two possibilities you mention is there not a third: that of the devotee who, without either the perfect Self-Realization of the Advaitin or the technical expertise of the Hermetist, attains through sheer goodness and devotion to a state of sanctity in which miraculous powers may manifest in him? You seem to admit this possibility in your reference to Christian saints,

WILFRED JONES,
London.

There is indeed this third possibility. In fact it is probably the most common of the three in actual practice. I omitted it because I was dealing with the more specific or 'scientific' meanings of realization.

Editor.

Re. 'I and my Father are One' by Sagittarius: There is no Horatio Gubbins, never has been, never could be. There is no 'H. G.' to experience anything, nor any 'thing' to be experienced. He believes that he is a sentient being, but his only being is the sentience whereby his identity is mistaken. All that he has to do is to cease mistaking the reflection of the moon in a puddle for the moon itself, which he is.

W. W. W.

Exactly: that is what I meant to convey.

SAGITTARIUS.

I particularly appreciate the articles on saints in *The Mountain Path*. Such a relief from the sort of magazine that only praises its own Swami and keeps mum about all others. In the July issue for the first time you have an article about one who is still living and can be contacted. I

would like very much to know if there are any more such.

BARBARA CLIFF,
London.

Yes. Actually there is an appreciation of one in the book review section of our issue of January 1965, another in that of the present issue. If everything goes according to plan two others will appear in our issues of April and July 1966. Others on occasion.

Editor.

I am reading your fine journal with the greatest appreciation and benefit — its broadness, embracing the tenets of all faiths, is a wonderful thing — and I envy all who have had the close contact with Bhagavan which gave rise to its inception and inspiration.

Your poem 'Be Still' in the January issue is beautiful. The inexpressible Truth is best revealed, I believe, in dedicated art, whatever the medium, if the recipient is to some degree attuned to it.

"... there is no other way

But to be still. In stillness then to find..." expresses the same thought as "Pay the price of silence and a thousand voices answer", and in a better way.

DOROTHY C. DONATH,
Washington D.C., U.S.A.

One day a fellow student of Joel Goldsmith's Infinite Way group handed me a copy of *The Mountain Path* and your editorial and poems were like a stream of light pouring through me. The issues I now have, and specifically the poem 'Be Still', have touched me deeply. The poem is magnificent. Your pen was aflame in writing

this and it has inspired so many. As for me, I have it constantly in sight, deeply breathing its message.

MRS. TERRY SANDERS,
New Jersey, U.S.A.

It was with sincere pleasure that my husband and myself read the journals which you so kindly forwarded to us. Especially welcome was the beautiful photograph of Sri Bhagavan in every copy. When the eyes behold the Grace so radiantly shining from the Maharshi's physical frame the heart sings at the knowledge that the Light which so gloriously animated flesh and bone remains ever the same. *The Mountain Path* contains spiritual instruction which will serve as 'daily bread' to those hearts yearning for wisdom. Accept our sincere gratitude for making available such knowledge. May all learn of the Holy Beacon ever shining within the sacred tabernacle of their hearts.

GLADYS DE MEUTER,
Johannesburg.

In one of your issues last year you promised to write about the Ashram becoming a residential ashram in the January issue of this year. No news has since appeared in any of the issues of the current year. Has that idea been dropped?

S. V. RAMAN,
Madras.

What I wrote (in the *Ashram Bulletin* of July 1964, p. 186-7) was: "During the lifetime of Bhagavan, as will be explained in our editorial of January 1965, devotees were not encouraged to make a long stay here. Recently the tendency to lengthier visits and to settling down here has increased and it has begun to be felt in the Ashram that the growth of a residential colony of devotees and aspirants has now become appropriate." So what I promised to explain in the January editorial was why devotees were not encouraged to make a lengthy stay during the lifetime of Bhagavan; and the editorial does explain that. Actually, it is not fully a residential ashram even now, though more so than formerly, since there is no organization of the work, life and activities of the devotees. All this the editorial explains.

Editor.

In the July Number Dr. Krishnan asked about the proper approach to the enquiry 'Who am I?' It is interesting in that connection to recall how the Buddha showed his disciples the voidness of the five aggregates. The *Anatta Lakkhana Sutta* says: "What do you think, bhikkhus, is the form permanent or impermanent?"

"It is impermanent, O Lord."

"And that which is impermanent, is it painful or joyful?"

"Painful, O Lord."

"And should one consider of that which is painful, impermanent and subject to change:

'This is mine, This I am, This is my self'?"

"One should not, O Lord."

The same is then repeated of feeling, perception, tendencies, consciousness.

BHIKSHU GNANARAMITA,
Dodanduwa, Ceylon.

This illustrates beautifully the theoretical discarding of the impermanent, but you must remember that Self-enquiry was taught by Bhagavan not as doctrine or theory but as a spiritual exercise.

Editor.

The July issue of *The Mountain Path* is really a splendid number with its invaluable articles — most inspiring to me.

DR. CRISNA M. P. VERNENCAR,
Goa.

The Mountain Path is by far the best of spiritual magazines and your efforts for its publication are praiseworthy. May it enlighten many a seeker of truth towards life's fulfilment.

A. V. RAMACHANDRA,
Bombay.

Thank you very much for sending our Buddhist group through me your very interesting quarterly *The Mountain Path*: it has been read with appreciation and interest. You are to be congratulated both on the subject matter, which is of inestimable value to all who seek, and also on the general high standard and size of your magazine. To all who know and love the life and message of the Maharshi it must come as a boon to have so many aspects of the life and teaching brought before them; while there is also so much of value and interest for those who, like our group, seek in the footsteps of another teacher: indeed, reading your quarterly, one reader at

least felt that on 'the mountain path' when in sight at last of the peak there is but one way, one teaching, one goal.

So thank you once again for bringing your quarterly to our notice and may your venture prove a strong link for all who tread 'the Mountain Path' as pilgrims, by whatever names we call ourselves.

W. B. PICARD,
Mousehole, Cornwall, England.

G. Madhava Rao of Somwarpet, an advocate, has cured some sixteen patients of scorpion bite by the yantra contained in the April issue of *The Mountain Path* and has asked me to convey his thanks. He practises spiritual healing and formerly used to cure them in that way, but some pain remained for a while at the point of the sting, whereas with the yantra no pain remains at all.

M. M. DAVE,
Raichur.

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In continuation of our previous list

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New York City
New York 10007
U.S.A.

N. Tharmalingam,
43, N. Eliya Road,
Welimada,
Ceylon.

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VIJAYADASAMI	Monday	4-10-1965
DEEPAVALI	Friday	22-10-1965
SKANDASASHTI	Saturday	30-10-1965
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)	Sunday	28-11-1965
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	Tuesday	7-12-1965
JAYANTHI OF SRI MAHARSHI (86th Birthday)	Friday	7-1-1966
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- thought ya sheshta 1/2 ml past 3/25 2

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yogasatras of Patanjali	by Charles Johnson	135	-
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Three Muslim Sages by Syed Wasim Wasar 19/7 26

(Art of Metallurgy by Geo Caldwell)

our spiritual resources

The Thunder of Silence

The Art of Healing



